

Introduction to biblical analysis using the historical-critical method

It should be noted from the outset that the historical-critical or historical criticism method of analyzing the biblical text is one approach among many. It has its strengths and limitations. In this presentation, I intend to focus on those elements of this method that ultimately enable me to answer the question: what did the final redactor want to say to the Christian community (or communities) he was first addressing? For me, this step is fundamental before moving on to the next one, where we ask ourselves: how can this word shed light on current problems and questions (for this step, see my proposal on [how to actualize the Gospels](#)). For if, for example, we want to actualize a gospel story while neglecting the initial stage where we seek to understand what the final writer wanted to say, we run the risk of simply retelling our own universe, without entering into the direction proposed by the evangelist.

Let's define a method as a normative scheme of operations that can be reproduced. In the historical-critical method, there are distinct operations that seek to answer distinct questions, but are at the same time at the service of the same task, and are therefore linked to form a pattern, i.e. one that can be repeated indefinitely each time a new text is tackled. We speak of a normative pattern, because there is a correct way of doing things, and this is how one exegete can reproach another for having done his work badly, as happens in the scientific world.

In the expression "historical-critical", there are two words: history and criticism. Let's start with the word "history". The exegete's work is first and foremost that of a historian, since the text before him is two thousand years old and he is seeking to understand its meaning. Thus, the biblical scholar tries to find the original text (textual criticism), identify the various elements that make up the text, their form, their source, their dependence on the Old Testament, the linguistic traits of the final redactor, how it differs from other texts of the period, the link between the themes proposed or the questions asked with what we know of the society of the time (on this subject, see the page on [hermeneutics in R.E. Brown's Introduction to the New Testament, which I have summarized on this site](#)). The biblical scholar also uses the expression "criticism", because in this work he applies the resources of reason to the study of texts, just as the archaeologist does in his excavations or the scientist in his laboratory. Theoretically, the exegete does not need to be a believer: he or she can detail the history of a text and clarify the final author's assertion, without adhering to it; for example, he or she may conclude that Luke 5's account of the miraculous catch of fish comes from the same tradition as John 21's miraculous catch of fish, and that John offers a more plausible context by placing it after Jesus' resurrection, even if he does not believe in this resurrection.

In what follows, I intend simply to present the most important elements of the historical-critical method, which I use in all my analyses, are in my opinion the most useful, are also taught in theological faculties and form part of the evaluation criteria in the work of students of biblical studies. I will also offer some practical analysis techniques and links to tools that I find very useful.

In my analysis of the Gospels, I proceed in six stages.

1. [Establishing the text: textual criticism](#)
2. [Setting the context and units of analysis](#)
3. [Establishing the structure of the analysis unit](#)
4. [Drawing parallels](#)
5. [Lexicographical analysis](#)
6. [Establishing the final editor's intention in the community context](#)

1. Establishing the text: textual criticism

1. [Manuscripts](#)
 2. [Manuscripts Family](#)
 - A. [Alexandrian text-type](#)
 - B. [Western text-type](#)
 - C. [Caesarean text-type](#)
 - D. [Byzantine text-type](#)
 3. [A methodical approach to textual criticism](#)
 - A. [Establishing variant readings](#)
 - B. [External evidence](#)
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 - C. [Luke 10: 15](#)
 - D. [Acts 28: 13](#)
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The aim of this task is to find out what was the original version of the gospel text, i.e. the autograph text, when it left the pen of the final editor to be transmitted. Before the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1454, texts were copied by hand

by copyists, and as error is human, these copyists could make careless mistakes, and the boldest would even take the liberty of modifying the text they were copying because they suspected an error or added their own theological touch. Let us take the example of the copy of 1 Clement in the Codex Alexandrinus. The text is full of errors: some words are spelled in four different ways; letters are sometimes omitted and sometimes doubled; there are errors in the endings. It gives the appearance of a text written by a scribe under dictation, without paying much attention to what he was doing.

N.B. [Raymond E. Brown's excellent introduction](#) to the subject should be consulted.

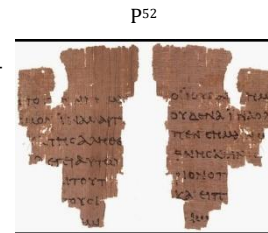
1. Manuscripts

For the period from the 2nd to the 15th century, 6,014 manuscripts have been found (Tommy Wasserman, [Manuscripts and the Making of the New Testament](#), Cambridge University Press, 2023):

- 141 papyri, identified with the letter P, followed by a number;
- 324 uncials, manuscripts written in capital letters, the most important of which are identified with a letter of our alphabet, or of the Greek or Hebrew alphabets, followed by a numeral;
- 2,538 minuscules, identified by a number only, with the exception of two families of minuscules, f1 and f13, each grouping a certain number of manuscripts;
- And 2,538 lectionaries used for liturgical celebrations.

A non-exhaustive list of these manuscripts can be found in [The Greek New Testament](#) published by the American Bible Society.

We have no original manuscripts of either the Gospels or the other New Testament writings. The earliest is P⁵², dated to around 125 AD, containing seven lines from Jn 18:31-33, barely 25 or 30 years after the gospel was first published. Some other manuscripts are very old, such as P¹⁰⁴ (a few lines of Mt 21:34-37) from the middle of the 2nd century, P⁹⁰ (a few fragments of Jn 18:36 - 19:7) or P⁹⁸ (fragments of Rv 1:13 - 2:1) from the end of the 2nd century. We have more manuscripts dating from the 3rd century, but it's from the 4th century onwards that we find the largest and most complete uncials on which biblical scholars rely heavily today. Let's mention the five main ones:



Codex Vaticanus

- The codex Vaticanus, known by the acronym B or the number 03, housed in the Vatican Library and dating from the period 325-350, contains the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint (on the Septuagint, see the [Glossary](#)), and the Greek text of the New Testament. It consists of 759 leaves, written in three columns, with 42 lines per column, except for the poetic books, which are written in two columns. Unfortunately, the first 20 leaves are missing (Gen 1:1 - 46:28a). It contains all the Septuagint texts except the four books of the Maccabees, and all the New Testament books except 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Revelation. It should be noted that the version of the Gospel according to Mark stops at Mk 16:8, and this codex does not contain the sections Mk 16:9-20 (post-resurrection scenes) and Jn 7:53 - 8:11 (account of the adulterous woman).



Below we offer as an example Mt 14:22-24 taken from the Vaticanus manuscript. In the left column, you will find the image of this column in the Vaticanus. In the center column, we present a facsimile of the image, given that the text of the Vaticanus is not always very legible. Note that the Greek text of the manuscript is written entirely in capital letters, with no spaces between words and no punctuation, just as it has no chapter or verse numbers, which appeared much later. Note also that the Greek letter Σ is written as C in the Vaticanus. In the right-hand column, we have included the text from K. Aland's [New Greek Testament](#). There are two differences to note. First, in K. Aland's text, the word (αυτου) is in parentheses because it is a word from the Vaticanus (in red) which, according to Aland, does not reflect the original text and which he did not include in his edition. Second, in K. Aland's text, the word [το] is in square brackets because it does not appear in the Vaticanus, but Aland, based on other manuscripts, believes that the Vaticanus omitted it either through carelessness or because the copy he used as a basis did not contain it.

Image from the Vaticanus of Matthew 14:22-24	Facsimile	Text from Greek New Testament of K. Aland, v. 28
<p>ΚΑΙ ΠΑΙΔΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΘΕΩΣ ΩΣ ΗΝ ΑΓΚΑΣΕΝ ΤΟΥΣ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΣ (αυτου) ΕΜΒΗΝΑΙ ΕΙΣ [τὸ] ΠΛΟΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟΑΓΕΙΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΕΙΣ Τὸ ΠΕΡΑΝ, ΞΩΣ Οὐ ΑΠΟΛΥΣΗ ΤΟΥΣ ΘΧΛΟΥΣ. 23 ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟΛΥΣΑΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΘΧΛΟΥΣ ΑΝΕΒΗ ΕΙΣ Τὸ ΘΡΟΣ ΚΑΤ' ΙΔΙΑΝ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΞΑΣΘΑΙ. ὈΨΙΑΣ ΔΕ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΗΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ ἦν ἐκεῖ. 24 τὸ δὲ ΠΛΟΙΟΝ ἦδη ΣΤΑΔΙΟΥΣ ΠΟΛΛΟΥΣ ΑΠὸ Τῆς Γῆς ἈΠΕΙΧΕΝ ΒΑΣΑΝΙΖΟΜΕΝΟΝ ὑΠὸ τῶν ΚΥΜΑΤΩΝ, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος. τετάρτη δὲ φυλακῆ τῆς νυκτὸς ἦλθεν</p>	<p>ΚΑΙ ΠΑΙΔΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΘΕΩΣ ΕΩΣ ΗΝ ΑΓΚΑΣΕΝ ΤΟΥΣ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΣ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΜΒΗΝΑΙ ΝΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΠΛΟΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟ ΑΓΕΙΝ ΑΘ ΤΟΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΕ ΡΑΝ ΕΩΣ ΟΥ ΑΠΟΛΥΣΗ ΤΟΥΣ ΘΧΛΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΛΥΣΑΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΘΧΛΟΥΣ Α ΝΕΒΗΙΣ ΤΟ ΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΤΙ ΔΙΑΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΥΞΑΣΘΑΙ ΟΨΙΑΣ ΔΕ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΗΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ ΕΝΕΚΕΙ ΤΟ ΔΕ ΠΛΟΙΟΝ ΗΔΗΣ ΤΑΔΙΟΥΣ ΠΟΛΛΟΥΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΓΗΣ ΑΠΕΙΧΕΝ ΒΑΣΑΝΙΖΟΜΕ ΝΟΝ ΥΠΟ ΤΩΝ ΚΥΜΑΤΩ Ν ΗΝ ΓΑΡ ΕΝΑΝΤΙΟΣ Ο ΑΝΕΜΟΣ. ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ ΔΕ ΦΥΛΑΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΝΥΚΤΟΣ ἦλθεν</p>	<p>καὶ παιδίων. 14, 22 Καὶ εὐθέως ἠνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς (αυτου) ἐμβῆναι εἰς [τὸ] πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὐ ἀπολύσει τοὺς ὄχλους. 23 καὶ ἀπολύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος κατ' ἰδίαν προσεύξασθαι. ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης μόνος ἦν ἐκεῖ. 24 τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἦδη σταδίους πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπέχεν βασανιζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος. τετάρτη δὲ φυλακῆ τῆς νυκτὸς ἦλθεν</p>

Codex Sinaiticus

- The codex Sinaiticus, designated by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet \aleph or the number 01 and discovered by the biblical scholar Tischendorf in 1844 during a visit to the monastery of St. Catherine in Egypt's Sinai desert, is dated to the period 330-360; 347 leaves of the codex are preserved in the British Library, and 43 leaves in the library of the University of Leipzig. It probably originally contained all the books of the Septuagint, but unfortunately not all have survived the test of time. Thus, the following writings appear in fragmentary form: Genesis, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Ezekiel, Lamentations, and the following books are missing: Ruth, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, 2 and 3 Maccabees. As for the New Testament books, they appear in their entirety, and two more have been added: the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. It should be noted that Mark's version of the Gospel stops at Mk 16:8, and does not include Mk 16:9-20 (post-resurrection scenes) and Jn 7:53 - 8:11 (story of the adulterous woman).



Codex Alexandrinus

- The codex Alexandrinus, designated by the letter A or the number 02, dates from the period 400-440. Its name derives from the fact that it was kept for many years in Alexandria, Egypt, before being transported to Istanbul and then to London at the British Library. It consists of 773 leaves divided into four volumes. Three volumes contain the Septuagint text, with 10 leaves missing. The fourth volume contains the New Testament, with 31 lost leaves concerning 1 and 2 Clement, so that chapters 56, 6 to 58, 4 of 1 Clement and the end of 2 Clement from chapter 12, 5 onwards are missing. But leaves that have survived the test of time are sometimes damaged, and so the texts of Genesis, Leviticus, Sirach, 1 Samuel, Psalm, Matthew, John, 2 Corinthians, 1-2 Clement are sometimes fragmentary; the pages on Revelation are trimmed at the edges. Note that Jn 7:53 - 8:11 (account of the adulterous woman) is absent from this codex, but it does contain the addition Mk 16:9-20 (post-resurrection scenes).



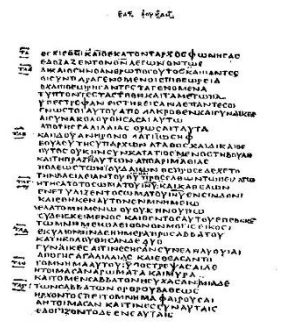
- The codex Ephraemi rescriptus, designated by the letter C, or the number 04, is dated circa 450 and housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. This codex is a palimpsest, i.e. the original text was scraped out and the Greek translation of the 38 sermons of Ephrem the Syrian was written in its place in the 12th century, hence the name of the codex: rewritten by Ephrem. It was therefore necessary to decode the remnants of the text that had been scratched out. The origin of this codex is unknown (Egypt?), but it is likely that the last corrector worked on the manuscript around 800 AD in Constantinople (Istanbul) and, after it had been reused for Ephrem's treatises in the 12th century, it was found again after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 when a scholar brought it to Florence, and it was Catherine de Medici who offered it as a gift to the King of France, who stored it in the Bibliothèque nationale. It was in the early 18th century that awareness of an ancient text undergoing rewriting began, and the library supervisor began the first readings of what had been scratched out. But it wasn't until the use of potassium ferricyanide to highlight what had been scratched out, and the intervention of Tischendorf, who published a complete version of the codex in 1843, that this was achieved. What about its content? For the Septuagint, only parts of the books of Job, Proverbs, Qohelet, Song of Songs, Wisdom and Sirach have survived. For the New Testament, it contains all the usual books except 2 Thessalonians and 2 John, but some of the books are missing a number of verses. The codex currently comprises 209 leaves (64 for the Septuagint, 145 for the New Testament). Note that Jn 7:53 - 8:11 (story of the adulterous woman) is absent from this codex, but it does contain the addition Mk 16:9-20 (post-resurrection scenes).

Ephraemi rescriptus



- The Bezae codex, designated by the letter D, or the number 05, dates from the 5th century and is housed in the library of Cambridge University in England. Unlike the previous four, this codex contains only the New Testament, and in a bilingual version: Greek and Latin. It originally comprised 534 leaves, of which 406 have survived. Gaps (absence of a group of verses) are found in Matthew, John and Acts. This codex stands out from the others for its interpolations, remarkable omissions and tendency to paraphrase. The Latin part has retained the form of the old Latin versions that prevailed before 250. Distinctive features of this codex include the long ending of Mark (16:9-20) and an 8% longer version of the Acts of the Apostles. Its origin is disputed. It has been pointed out that it was repaired in the 9th century in Lyon (France) and kept for several centuries in the library of the Saint-Irénée monastery in Lyon. But during the religious wars of the 16th century, the Huguenots ransacked the monastery library in 1563 and entrusted the codex to the Protestant biblical scholar Theodore Beza, who in turn donated it to the Cambridge University Library in 1581.

Codex Bezae



Despite the great value of these uncials, they are dependent on earlier manuscripts that had been copied, and their value cannot be greater than that of the manuscripts on which they depend. Thus, when we look at the various variants for a particular verse, we cannot simply decide that the reading proposed by one of these five uncials is necessarily the best (i.e. best in reflecting the original text); while we must recognize that they exert a certain weight in the evaluation, other criteria come into play.

2. Manuscripts Family

In the early centuries, New Testament manuscripts tended to be copied more and more in the major centers of Christianity: Alexandria, Caesarea, Antioch, Rome, Constantinople (after Constantine's victory). Over time, the variations found in manuscripts were associated with one or other of these centers, giving rise to a classification by family. This resulted in four families: the Alexandrian text, the Western text, the Caesarean text and the Byzantine text.

A. Alexandrian text-type

It accounts for a large proportion of ancient manuscripts, and biblical scholars generally prefer this family of texts. Modern translations give it a place of choice. In this family, the text sometimes ends abruptly, like the ending of Mk 16:8, a sign that the copyist did not try to improve this ending. Another feature is its conciseness, a sign that the copyist has not tried to paraphrase the text. Another feature is apparent in the synoptic parallels: the particularities of each evangelist stand out more clearly, a sign that the copyist did not try to harmonize the various versions. Finally, this lack of harmonization or "polishing" of the text means that we are often faced with a reading that is considered difficult to explain.

Which manuscripts belong to this family? You can consult [Wikipedia](#) for a suggested list. Of our five uncials, the first four belong to this family (except for the Gospels in the case of the Alexandrinus and Ephraemi rescriptus codices),

the exception being the Bezae codex, which belongs to the Western family. Old papyri such as P⁶⁶ (c. 200, containing much of the Gospel of John) and P⁷⁵ (c. 200-225, containing parts of Luke and John) also belong to this family. Similarly, the oldest Sahidic Coptic translation belongs to this family. Some early Christian authors reflect this family, such as Origen, Athanasius, Didymus and Cyril of Alexandria.

B. Western text-type

The name of this family comes from the fact that the manuscripts were copied in the western part of the Roman Empire (North Africa, Italy, Gaul). But it often serves as a catch-all for several text families. This family is found in the old Latin and Syriac translations of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It appears mainly in the Gospels, Acts and Paul's epistles, but is absent from the Catholic epistles and Revelation.

This family is characterized by a certain freedom on the part of the copyist, who often takes the liberty of paraphrasing or glossing to accentuate certain points, or to harmonize with other passages, or to complete what seems incomplete. Sometimes the copyist inserts or adds phrases from non-canonical books. The result is a longer text, particularly in the Acts of the Apostles. But there are a few cases where the Western version is shorter, as in the case of certain verses in Luke (ch. 22 and especially ch. 24), known as Western non-interpolation.

A representative of this family for the Gospels and Acts is the codex Bezae. As for Paul's epistles, the codex Claromontanus is the best known. Among ancient authors, Cyprian, Tertullian and Irenaeus of Lyons reflect this type of manuscript. For a list of manuscripts associated with this family, see [Wikipedia](#).

C. Caesarean text-type

The family's name comes from the city of Caesarea in Palestine, which had become an important Christian center in the 3rd and 4th centuries, with an impressive library for its time, so much so that Origen settled there around the year 230. Its features are often defined negatively by the fact that its manuscripts belong to no other type of text. There is a slight tendency to paraphrase, but without going as far as the Western text. These features can be found in Origen's quotations after his arrival in Caesarea, and in 5th-century Armenian and Georgian translations.

[Wikipedia](#) provides a suggested list of manuscripts associated with this family. Among the uncials is the Korinthi codex (9th century), among the papyri P⁴⁵ (3rd c.), and among the minuscules the two groups f¹ and f¹³ (11th to 15th c.).

D. Byzantine text-type

The name comes from the city of Byzantium, which became Constantinople with the arrival of Emperor Constantine, and replaced Rome as capital of the Roman Empire. It was thus an important center of Christianity. Over time, a kind of standardization of the text took place, ironing out difficulties and harmonizing differences, so that we can speak of a common text, or *koinē*, which eventually covered 90% of manuscripts and became normative from the 6th century onwards. It is the official version of the Eastern Orthodox Church and was used for all lectionaries. It was used in the Syriac translation of the Peshitta (5th c.), even if here and there we note the influence of other types of text, and in the 6th-century Ethiopian translation. And this is the version used by Erasmus for his edition of the Textus Receptus (received or official text) in 1516. The Byzantine text is echoed in quotations from Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Basil the Great and Cyril of Jerusalem. [Wikipedia](#) provides a list of manuscripts associated with the Byzantine text. Note that a manuscript can be hybrid, i.e. some of the texts, such as the Gospels, can be assigned to one type, while the others to another.

3. A methodical approach to textual criticism

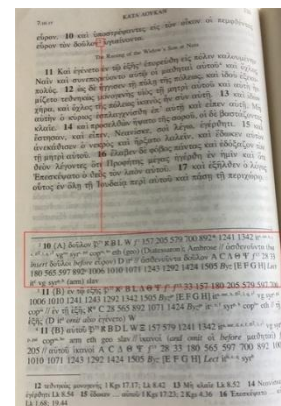
In their analysis, most biblical scholars use the [The Greek New Testament](#) published jointly by Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, American Bible Society, United Bible Societies, edited by Kurt Aland et alii. Now, this edition presents an eclectic version of the New Testament, as the editors have already made choices between the various variants, choices to which they have attached a rating {a}, {b}, {c}, {d} according to the degree of certainty of having made the right choice, {a} designating the highest level of certainty, {d} the lowest. Note that this edition of Greek New Testament is limited to the most important variants. For a more extensive list of variants, use Nestlé-Aland's [Novum Testamentum Graece](#). A methodical approach in textual criticism suggests four steps.

A. Establishing variant readings

Variant readings are established using the critical apparatus offered by either [The Greek New Testament](#) or the [Novum Testamentum Graece](#). For each verse, these New Testament editions point out the discrepancies between the thousands of manuscripts. It's then a matter of understanding the language of these editions to spot one or more variants, in order to analyze them later.

Let's start with an example from [The Greek New Testament](#). Each variant place is indicated with a numbering that starts at 1 for each chapter of a document. Let's take Mt 14:24, where the number 3 appears in the middle of the verse, after *ἀπέιχεν* : τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἦδη **σταδίους πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπέιχεν**³ βασιανίζομενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος. This number refers to the critical apparatus at the bottom of the page, where the number

Critical apparatus in the [Greek New Testament](#) for Luke 7: 10



3 also appears. This critical apparatus displays all the possible variants of this part of the verse, which we have bolded, as well as the manuscripts that support this variant.

Let us now turn to the *Novum Testamentum Graece* for this same verse, where the variant place is presented thus: τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ὀῆδη Ϛ σταδίου πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπεῖχεν Ἰ βασανιζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος. Here we find three symbols: firstly, the symbol ^o which means that the following word (ἦδη) is omitted in some manuscripts, then the symbol Ϛ that signals the beginning of a set of words that ends with the symbol Ἰ to indicate that this set knows several variants. At the bottom, in the critical apparatus for v. 24, we find the same symbols and the different variants with the manuscripts that support them. Note that in v. 25 we find the symbol Ϛ next to the word ἦλθεν to indicate that only this word knows variants.

Let us give the example of the various readings or versions of the variant reading of Mt 14:24 with their very literal translation.

- i. σταδίου πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπεῖχεν (several stadia from land was far [the boat].)
- ii. σταδίου πολλοὺς ἀπεῖχεν (several stadia was far [the boat])
- iii. σταδίου τῆς γῆς ἀπεῖχεν ἱκανοὺς (stadia of the land was far enough [the boat].)
- iv. ἀπεῖχεν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς σταδίου ἱκανοὺς (was far [the boat] from the land stadia enough)
- v. ἀπεῖχεν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς σταδίου ὡς εἴκοσι πέντε (was far [the boat] from the land stadia about twenty-five)
- vi. μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης ἦν (in the middle of the sea was [the boat].)
- vii. ἦν εἰς μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης (was [the boat] into the middle of the sea)
- viii. ἐκινδύνευεν ἦδη μέσον τῆς θαλάσσης (was in danger [the boat] in the middle of the sea)

A preliminary observation shows that the various readings can be broadly grouped into two categories: those that speak of being several stadia away from land, and those that speak of being in the middle of the sea.

B. External Evidence

External evidence search is concerned with the manuscripts that support a variant and their value. The aim is to determine whether it is possible to choose the best variant (the one that best reflects the original version) with a certain degree of probability.

What are the criteria for evaluating manuscripts that support a variant?

- i. The first criterion is the value of the manuscript, based on its quality. Not all manuscripts are of equal quality. Some manuscripts seem to have been copied quickly by copyists with little schooling, while others were copied with great care by copyists with a good knowledge of Greek. Some copyists thought they were doing the right thing by “improving” the text they had in front of them when a word or expression appeared obscure, while others scrupulously respected the text they were copying. Some manuscripts were revised by a proofreader. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus codices, more complete than many others and having undergone revisions, have been given greater value by biblical scholars, as have some of the great Uncials (in capital letters) of the 5th and 6th centuries.
- ii. The value of a text is also determined by its age: the older a text, such as that offered by the papyri, the greater its importance; for the more a manuscript is copied through the ages, the greater the likelihood that it will be distorted. This is why minuscule manuscripts are given less value than uncial ones. This is why biblical scholars value the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus codices, which date from the middle of the 4th century.
- iii. Another criterion is the number of manuscripts supporting a particular reading or variant. For example, when a variant is supported by only one or two minuscules, it is unlikely to reflect the autograph version.
- iv. Finally, the manuscript family must be considered in the evaluation criteria. For example, we know that manuscripts belonging to the Western text are more likely to have been altered than those belonging to the Alexandrian text. Similarly, if a variant is only found in one family, and not in the others, it may be considered as a copyist's modification replicated by the descendants of that family.

Very often, the application of all these criteria does not allow us to reach a conclusion with any degree of probability, and it is only with internal evidence that we can reach a decision. Let's take the example of Mt 14:24. Here again is the list of variant readings with the manuscripts that support each of them.

- i. "several stadia from land was far [the boat]." supported by the Vaticanus (4th c.), family 13 of minuscules (11th to 15th c.), Cureton's Syriac translations (3rd or 4th c.), the Peshitta (early 5th c.) and the Palestinian Syriac translation (6th c.).
- ii. "several stadia was far [the boat]" supported by lectionary 253 (year 1020) and the Sahidic Coptic translation (late 4th c.).
- iii. "stadia of the land was far enough [the boat]" supported by the minuscule 700 (11th c.).
- iv. "was far [the boat] from the land stadia enough" supported by the Koridethi codex (9th c.), and Georgian (5th c.) and Armenian (5th c.) translations.

- v. "was far [the boat] from the land stadia about twenty-five" supported by the Coptic Bohemian translation (3rd c.) and the Ethiopian translation (6th c.).
- vi. "in the middle of the sea was [the boat]" supported by the codexes Sinaiticus (4th c.), Ephraemi rescriptus (5th c.), Regius (8th c.), Washingtonianus (4th or 5th c.), Sangallensis (9th c.), 073 (6th c.), 0106 (7th c.), minuscules family 1 (10th to 14th c.), as well as minuscules 28 (11th c.), 33 (9th c.), 157 (year 1122), 180 (12th c.), 205 (15th c.), 565 (9th c.), 579 (13th c.), 597 (13th c.), and many others, Byzantine uncials from the 6th to 9th centuries, most lectionaries, old Latin translations: Vercelli (4th c.), Aureus Holmiensis (7th c.), Verona (5th c.), Colbertinus (12th c.), and several others, the Vulgate (late 4th c.), the Syriac translation Harklensis (year 616), Slavonic (9th c.), and certain Ethiopian translations (6th c.), and by Origen (185-253), John Chrysostom (347-407), Jerome (342-420) and Augustine (354-430).
- vii. "was [the boat] into the middle of the sea" supported by the Codex Bezae (5th c.), some old Latin (5th c.), Coptic (5th c.) and Ethiopian (6th c.) translations, and by Eusebius of Caesarea (260-339).
- viii. "was in danger [the boat] in the middle of the sea" supported by the minuscule 1546 (year 1263).

Let's try to apply our criteria.

- a. Consider the number of manuscripts supporting a reading. Clearly, reading vi. outclasses all the others, with over fifty manuscripts supporting it. This reading presents the idea of being in the middle of the sea. In contrast, five of the eight readings support the idea of being far from land.
- b. Let's now consider the age of the manuscripts. Readings i., ii., v. and vi. are supported by manuscripts from the 3rd and 4th centuries. In this case, the oldest manuscripts support both the idea of being far from land and that of being in the middle of the sea.
- c. Consider the value placed on the great codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The Vaticanus supports the idea of being far from land, while the Sinaiticus supports the idea of being in the middle of the sea.
- d. Finally, let's consider the family of manuscripts. The Alexandrian texts support both the idea of being far from the earth, through the Vaticanus and the Koridethi codex, and that of being in the middle of the sea, through the Sinaiticus and the Regius codex. The family of Western texts supports the idea of being in the middle of the sea with the codex Bezae. The family of Byzantine texts supports both the idea of being far from land, with family 13 of the minuscules, and that of being in the middle of the sea, with the codex Washingtonianus and Sangallensis. The family of Caesarean texts supports both the idea of being far from land with minuscule 700 and that of being in the middle of the sea with minuscule 1.

Using all these criteria, we can't definitively determine Matthew's original text. Of course, the weight of the number favours reading vi., but the other criteria oblige us to exercise restraint and refer us to internal evidence for the final decision.

C. Internal evidence

Searching for internal evidence is an analytical process that attempts to explain, for each variant, what could have happened to make the copyist offer us this reading. The starting point is the assumption that the copyist intervened to introduce a modification to the text he was copying. The most fruitful method in this analysis is to proceed by considering different scenarios.

- i. A possible scenario explaining this reading is that the copyist wanted to harmonize the text of one evangelist with that of another. Probably he found hard to understand why, for a similar scene, the evangelists' expressions are not the same. Let's not forget that the copyist often imagined that an evangelist was an eyewitness to the scene, describing what he saw.
- ii. Another possible scenario is a careless error: a copyist may skip an article or pronoun when copying a manuscript. Or he may forget a letter in the spelling of a word.
- iii. Another possible scenario is that, faced with an unusual sentence structure, the copyist replaces it with what was customary in his day.
- iv. Another possible scenario is that, faced with an obscure or unclear word or expression, or one that lacks precision, the copyist seeks to clarify things or give more details.
- v. Another possible scenario is that the text to be copied is dictated orally, in which case the words are copied according to the copyist's known spelling.
- vi. Another possible scenario is that the copyist replaces the expression to be copied with the expression he is used to hearing during the liturgy.
- vii. Another possible scenario is a situation called homoioteleuton, which means "similar endings". Homoioteleuton occurs when two words/phrases/lines end with the same sequence of letters. The scribe, having finished copying the first, moves on to the second, omitting all words in between; for example, the first sentence begins with "Jesus left...", and after copying this expression, the scribe looks back at the text to be copied, the second sentence of which, by chance, also contains "Jesus left..."; without realizing it, he continues copying with the second sentence, forgetting the first.

What criteria can be used to select the reading that is likely to be closest to the autograph copy?

- i. When a reading presents a clear case of harmonization, choose the one where the evangelist's version differs from its parallel.
- ii. Copyists tend to add to the text they are copying, often to clarify or make explicit what is written. For example, a copyist will occasionally add a detail in one evangelist's account that is taken from another evangelist's account, a form of amalgam. In such cases, the principle of *lectio brevior* is applied: the briefest or most concise reading is chosen.
- iii. Copyists tend to smooth out the text's difficulties and ensure that everything is coherent. With this in mind, we occasionally apply the principle of *lectio difficilior probabilior*: the most difficult reading is the most likely; indeed, it is more likely that the copyist has added the word we expected than the word we did not.
- iv. Copyists sometimes replace certain Greek words or expressions with those better known in the religious world of their time. A good way to spot these modifications is to master the vocabulary and syntax of an evangelist. This allows us to conclude that it is probably impossible for the gospel to have used a particular word or expression from another literary universe.
- v. Finally, the copyist may have had a moment's inattention, forgetting an article, an adverb or a pronoun, or, in a case of *homoioleuton*, skipping part of a sentence, leaving the text with a limp. In such a situation, we can either use other manuscripts to fill in the gaps, or have recourse to other similar passages by the evangelist to confirm his way of constructing his sentences and the vocabulary with which he is familiar.

Let's apply what we've learned to Mt 14:24.

Let's consider possible scenarios to explain the various readings.

Let's start with category 2 and reading vi. How do we explain that a copyist wrote: "in the middle of the sea was [the boat]?"

- "in the middle of the sea was [the boat]". A copyist knew the parallel passage in Mk 6:47, which begins in the same way as Mt 14:24 (then, [the late hour] having arrived) and where we read: ἦν τὸ πλοῖον ἐν μέσῳ τῆς θαλάσσης (was the boat in the middle of the sea) and therefore decided to harmonize the two passages based on Mark, and so replaced "many stadia from the land was" with "in the middle of the sea was"; this harmonization was justified, as it was the same narrative.
- "was [the boat] into the middle of the sea". For reading vii., either a scribe had reading vi. in front of him and therefore copied it, moving the verb "to be" (ἦν) so it would be at the beginning of the sentence, to imitate Marc, or, like the scribe in reading vi., he has harmonized Matthew's text with Mark's, while respecting Mark's place for the verb to be.
- "was in danger [the boat] in the middle of the sea". For reading viii, either the copyist had reading vi in front of him, or he himself took the initiative of harmonizing with Mk 6:47, and then added a detail from Lk 8:23, the story of the stilled storm, where the wind blows, the boat was submerged, and the disciples "were in danger".

Let's continue with the first category and reading i.

- "several stadia from land was far [the boat]". If the autograph reading was that around the idea of being in the middle of the sea, a copyist might have wanted to modify this idea and come closer to the text of Jn 6:19, which describes this scene of Jesus walking on the sea, using these words: "They had rowed about 25 or 30 stadia"; he would then have borrowed the word "stadia" from John and replaced the precision of 25 or 30 stadia with "several", and added the fact that the boat "was distant from the land". But such a hypothesis is difficult to accept, as we have seen that the idea of being in the middle of the sea is a harmonization from Mk 6:47, and in this case the idea of being several stadia away from the land probably better reflects the autograph version. What's more, if the scribe was seeking inspiration from Jn 6:19, why would he have discarded the precision of 25 or 30 stadia for the vague expression of "several"?
- "several stadia was far [the boat]". The copyist of this reading ii. would have had reading i. in front of him, but finding the expression "from the earth" redundant and unnecessary, would have simply eliminated it.
- "stadia of the land was far enough [the boat]". The copyist of this reading iv. may have been looking at reading i. and would have considered the adjective "several" too vague, replacing it with "enough" to indicate that the boat was "sufficiently" far from the shore to be in a perilous situation, a clarification to explain the presence of wind and waves. In making this change, he also took the opportunity to move the verb to the beginning of the sentence, so as to make the adjective stick to the noun (stades) whose attribute it is.

- "was far [the boat] from the land stadia enough". The copyist of this reading iii. may have had reading i. in front of him, and would have had the same reflex as the copyist of reading iv. in adding "enough", except that he refused to eliminate the word "several" and change the word order.
- "was far [the boat] from the land stadia about twenty-five". The copyist of this reading v. may have been looking at reading i., and would have found the adjective "several" too vague, especially as Jn 6:19 gave the precision of 25 or 30 stadia; so he borrowed the number 25 from John and, in so doing, moved the verb to the beginning of the sentence to stick the adjective 25 to the noun (stadia) of which it is the attribute.

Once we've completed this exercise, in which we've tried to put ourselves in the scribes' shoes, it remains for us to apply one or other of our four criteria of internal criticism in order to eliminate the unlikely and retain only the most probable.

- According to principle i., when a reading presents a clear case of harmonization, choose the one where the evangelist's version differs from its parallel. In this case, we must eliminate readings vi. to viii. which are cases of harmonization with Mk 6:47, and reading v. where the copyist has harmonized the text with Jn 6:19.
- According to principle ii., the *lectio brevior* is preferable, as the copyist tends to add details to clarify things. Thus, the briefer readings of i. and ii. are to be preferred to readings iii. and iv. which add the adjective "enough" to the word stadia.

Now, how can we distinguish between readings i. and ii. and choose the reading that best reflects the autograph text? For the only difference between the two readings is the absence in reading ii. of the expression "from the land". Was it part of the original? This brings us to the final stage, where we bring together the results of external and internal evidence search.

D. The final decision

The internal review left us with two candidates. Let's go back to the external evidence to decide between them. Reading i. is supported by the Vaticanus (4th c.), family 13 of the Minuscules (11th to 15th c.), Cureton's Syriac translations (3rd or 4th c.), the Peshitta (early 5th c.) and the Palestinian (6th c.) Syriac translation. Reading ii. is supported by lectionary 253 (year 1020) and the Sahidic Coptic translation (late 4th c.). This comparison of manuscripts obliges us to opt for reading i., which is supported by one of the most prestigious and oldest codexes, the Vaticanus, as well as by quality manuscripts such as Cureton's Syriac translations and the Peshitta. The criterion of age may also come into play, as the i. reading benefits from the oldest manuscripts. Finally, there's the number of manuscripts: let's remember that family 13 of minuscules comprises 13 manuscripts.

4. Examples of textual criticism analysis

Let's apply the rules we've just enumerated

A. Luke 10: 1,17

- Variant readings (v. 1 et 17)
 - Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀνέδειξεν ὁ κύριος ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα δύο* (Then, after these things, he appointed the Lord of others, **seventy-two**)
 - Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀνέδειξεν ὁ κύριος ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα* (Then, after these things, he appointed the Lord of others, **seventy**)

This is a scene from Luke where, in addition to the Twelve, Jesus appoints and sends out other disciples on mission. How many disciples? Some manuscripts refer to 72 other disciples, while others speak of 70. Let's concentrate on Lk 10:1, since v. 17 is an echo of v. 1.

- External evidence
 - The reading "Then, after these things, he appointed the Lord of others, seventy-two" is supported by papyrus P⁷⁵ (3rd c.), codex Vaticanus (4th c.), codex Bezae (5th c.), codex 0181 (4th/5th c.), as well as by several old Latin translations (4th-6th c.), the Vulgate (4th/5th c.), Coptic (3rd c.), Armenian (5th c.) and Georgian (5th c.) translations, the Diatessaron (2nd c.), Adamantius (4th c.), the Apostolic Constitution (380 c.), Pseudo-Ambrose (4th c.) and Augustine (5th c.).
 - The reading "Then, after these things, he appointed the Lord of others, seventy" is supported by the codexes Sinaiticus (4th c.), Alexandrinus (5th c.), Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th c.), Washingtonianus (4th/5th c.), Zacynthius (6th c.), Regius (8th c.), Sangallensis (9th c.) and Augustine (5th c.), Sangallensis (9th c.), Athous Lavrensis (9th/10th c.), families 1 and 13, as well as a considerable number of manuscripts in minuscule (11th to 15th c.), manuscripts from the Byzantine tradition such as uncials 07 (8th c.), 011 (9th c.), 013 (9th c.) and 022 (6th c.), some Latin translations (5th-7th c.), Syriac (5th-7th c.) and Coptic (3rd

c.), Ethiopian (6th c.), Slavonic (9th c.), as well as the testimony of a number of Church Fathers such as Irenaeus of Lyon (2nd c.), Clement of Alexandria (2nd/3rd c.), Origen (3rd c.), Eusebius of Caesarea (4th c.), Basil the Great (4th c.), Cyril of Alexandria (5th c.), Theodoret (5th c.), Tertullian (3rd c.), Ambrose (4th c.) and Jerome (4th-5th c.).

Let's apply our criteria.

- i. Let's consider the quality of the manuscripts, bearing in mind that biblical scholars give priority first to the two prestigious manuscripts, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, and then to the other major codices. Reading i. is supported by codex Vaticanus, codex Bezae and codex 0181, while reading ii. is supported by codex Sinaiticus, codex Alexandrinus, codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, codex Washingtonianus, codex Zacynthius, codex Regius, codex Sangallensis and codex Athous Lavrensis. Both readings are therefore supported by quality codexes, even if they are slightly more numerous in reading ii.
- ii. In terms of age, reading i. is supported by manuscripts from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries, while reading ii. is supported by manuscripts from the 4th and 5th centuries, as well as by the testimony of the Church Fathers, some of which date back to the 2nd century. The support of papyrus P⁷⁵ (3rd c.) may give a certain advantage to reading i., but the fact remains that both readings benefit from a certain antiquity.
- iii. In terms of the number of testimonies, both readings are widely supported, although mathematically, reading ii. seems to predominate.
- iv. Both readings are supported by the various manuscript families. The family of Alexandrian texts is present in reading i. through papyrus P⁷⁵, codex Vaticanus and codex 081, and in reading ii. through codex Sinaiticus and codex Regius. The family of Western texts is represented in reading i. by the codex Bezae, and in reading ii. by Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian. The family of Caesarean texts does not seem to be present in reading i., but it is present in reading ii. through the family of minuscule f¹ and f¹³, as well as 28, 565 and 700. Finally, the Byzantine text family does not appear to be present in reading i., but is present in reading ii. through the Alexandrinus, Ephraemi rescriptus, and Washingtonianus codexes.

With these criteria, the readings are almost of equal value. Some might acknowledge a slight prevalence to reading ii. due to the number of manuscripts and its presence in all text type families. But on the other hand, the great value of the testimony of papyrus P⁷⁵, Tatian's Diatessaron and the Apostolic Constitution would point others in the direction of a preference for reading i. Nevertheless, all this is insufficient to make a final decision.

c. Internal evidence

Before considering the various possible scenarios to explain either the number 72 or the number 70, we need to try and understand where these two numbers come from.

According to the Hebrew version of Gn 10, only Noah and his sons survived the flood that wiped out the entire earth. Yet all the nations of the world were born from Noah's three sons. Now, if we count the nations begotten by Noah's first son, Shem, and his descendants, we get the figure 27; and if we do the same with Noah's second son, Ham, we get the figure 11, and finally, if we do the same with the third son, Japheth, we get the figure 32. And so, if we add up the nations from which Noah's three sons originated, we get 70 nations. On the other hand, when we read Gen 10 according to the Greek translation of the Septuagint, Shem would be the origin of 27 nations, Ham would be the origin of 30 nations, Japheth would be the origin of 15 nations. And if we add up the Septuagint version, we get a total of 72 nations.

How do you choose between 70 and 72? It's clear that, for Luke, this second sending, after that of the Twelve, is no longer addressed to the Jews, but to all the nations of the world. Now, how many nations does the Bible say there are in the world? According to the Hebrew Bible, the number is 70; according to the Septuagint version, the number is 72. The following scenarios are therefore conceivable.

- i. One possible scenario is that Luke, rooted in his Greek culture and a regular visitor to the Septuagint, recorded the number 72 as the total of the nations according to the Septuagint. A copyist with a Jewish culture and knowing that in this milieu the total of nations is 70, would then have replaced the number 72 with 70.
- ii. Conversely, it's possible that Luke, through Paul or other Jews, knew that in Judaism the total number of nations was 70, and so for him this is the number of the other disciples who were sent out. However, a copyist familiar with the Septuagint and unaware of Jewish tradition would have replaced the number 70 with 72.
- iii. A final possible scenario is that of an oversight. In fact, Luke would have written: *ἑβδομήκοντα δύο* (seventy-two), but the copyist would have forgotten to copy the final *δύο*.

The first three criteria for internal criticism that we established earlier are difficult to apply in this situation. Firstly, as there is no parallel text, this cannot be a case of harmonization. Secondly, this is not a case of clarification where the principle of *lectio brevior* must be applied. Finally, this is not a case of difficult text, where the principle of *lectio difficilior probabilius* must be applied. We could apply our fifth criterion by assuming that we are faced with a case where a scribe forgot to copy *δύο*; however, given that the number 70 is justified as the number of nations, it seems unlikely to us that this is a case of forgetfulness. This leaves us with the fourth case, where a copyist makes a change because of his religious or cultural background. Using this criterion, it seems more likely to me that Luke the Greek, familiar with the Septuagint, inscribed the number 72 as the number of disciples sent to all nations, and that it was a scribe who, as early as the 2nd century (as Irenaeus of Lyons seems to have known this reading), when the Jewish world was exerting influence, replaced it with the number 70.

d. The final decision

Considering the great value of the testimony of papyrus P⁷⁵, the Vaticanus, Tatian's Diatessaron and the Apostolic Constitution, and considering that it is more likely that Luke the Greek used the Septuagint total of the number of nations, we opt for reading i., i.e. the number 72.

It should be noted that the Greek New Testament has opted for the number 72, but with the degree of certainty rating {C} (i.e. the editors had difficulty reaching a decision). The vast majority of French Bibles have opted for the number 72, with the exception of the 1910 Louis Second translation, while English Bibles have mostly opted for the number 70, with the exception of the New International version with 72, and the New American Bible, which has bracketed the number "two" after the number 70.

B. Mark 10: 7

a. The variant readings

There are three readings for this variant.

- i. *ἔνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα* (For this reason a man will leave his father and the mother)
- ii. *ἔνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ* (For this reason a man will leave his father and the mother **and will stick towards his wife**)
- iii. *ἔνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται τῇ γυναίκε αὐτοῦ* (For this reason a man will leave his father and the mother **and will stick to his wife**)

b. External evidence

- i. The reading "For this reason a man will leave his father and the mother" is supported by the codex Sinaiticus (4th c.), the Vaticanus (4th c.), and Athous Lavrensis (9th c.) as well as the Syriac version of the Sinaiticus (3rd/4th c.).
- ii. The reading "For this reason a man will leave his father and the mother and will stick towards his wife" is supported by the codexes Bezae (5th c.), Washingtonianus (3rd/4th c.), and Koridethi (9th c.), and family 13 of minuscule manuscripts, Byzantine texts, lectionaries of old Latin translations, the Vulgate and old Syriac, Coptic and Armenian translations.
- iii. The reading "For this reason a man will leave his father and the mother and will stick to his wife" is supported by the codexes Alexandrinus (5th c.), Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th c.), Regius (8th c.), Petropolitanus Purpureus (6th c.), Sangallensis (9th c.), family 1 of minuscule manuscripts (11th to 15th c.).

Let's apply our criteria.

- i. Let's consider the quality of the manuscripts, knowing that biblical scholars give priority first to the two prestigious manuscripts, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, and then to the other great codices. Now, all three readings are supported by good codices, but reading i. is supported by the two best, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.
- ii. Consider the age of the manuscripts. Only reading i. is supported by 4th-century manuscripts.
- iii. In terms of the number of testimonies, readings ii. and iii. seem to benefit the most.
- iv. Let's consider the family of manuscripts to which the witnesses belong. The family of Alexandrian text-type is present in reading i. through the codex Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Athous Lavrensis, and in reading iii. through the codex Regius and Sangallensis, but seems absent from reading ii. The family of Western texts is only present in reading ii. through the codex Bezae. The family of Caesarean texts is absent from

reading i., but present in reading ii. through the codex Washingtonianus and Koridethi, and family 13 of minuscule manuscripts, and present in reading iii. through family 13 of minuscules. Finally, the family of Byzantine texts is absent from reading i., but present in reading ii. mainly through the lectionaries, and in reading iii. through the Alexandrinus and Ephraemi Rescriptus codices.

External critics give a slight advantage to reading i. due to the quality of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts, and to the fact that reading ii. not only receives no support from the family of Alexandrian texts, reputed to contain few alterations, but is supported by the Western family, where modifications are regularly encountered. As for the iii. family, it appears above all as a variant of reading ii. In short, external criticism suggests that reading i. probably best reflects the autograph text. Let's turn to the internal critique for confirmation.

c. Internal evidence

Before examining the various scenarios to explain the differences in the readings, let's ask the question: which OT passage is the evangelist referring to? In fact, it's Gen 2:24. Let's compare the Genesis text with our three readings and with the parallel passage in Matthew 19:5, underlining similar words present in all 5 texts, and coloring in blue the words common to reading iii. and Matthew, in green the words common to all but reading i., and in red the words common to Genesis and Matthew only.

Gn 2: 24 (LXX)	Reading i	Reading ii	Reading iii	Mt 19: 5
<u>ἔνεκεν τούτου</u> <u>καταλείψει</u> <u>ἄνθρωπος τὸν</u> <u>πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ</u> <u>τὴν</u> <u>μητέρα</u> αὐτοῦ καὶ <u>προσκολληθήσεται</u> <u>πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα</u> <u>αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ</u> <u>δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.</u>	<u>ἔνεκεν τούτου</u> <u>καταλείπει</u> <u>ἄνθρωπος τὸν</u> <u>πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ</u> <u>τὴν μητέρα</u>	<u>ἔνεκεν τούτου</u> <u>καταλείψει</u> <u>ἄνθρωπος τὸν</u> <u>πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ</u> <u>τὴν μητέρα καὶ</u> <u>προσκολληθήσεται</u> <u>πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα</u> <u>αὐτοῦ</u>	<u>ἔνεκεν τούτου</u> <u>καταλείψει</u> <u>ἄνθρωπος τὸν</u> <u>πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ</u> <u>τὴν μητέρα καὶ</u> <u>προσκολληθήσεται τ</u> <u>ῆ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ</u>	<u>ἔνεκα τούτου</u> <u>καταλείψει</u> <u>ἄνθρωπος τὸν</u> <u>πατέρα καὶ τὴν</u> <u>μητέρα καὶ</u> <u>κολληθήσεται τῇ</u> <u>γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ</u> <u>ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς</u> <u>σάρκα μίαν.</u>
<u>For this reason a</u> <u>man will leave his</u> <u>father</u> <u>and his mother and</u> <u>will stick towards his</u> <u>wife, and they will be</u> <u>both in one flesh..</u>	<u>For this reason a</u> <u>man will leave his</u> <u>father and the</u> <u>mother</u>	<u>For this reason a</u> <u>man will leave his</u> <u>father and the</u> <u>mother and will stick</u> <u>towards his wife</u>	<u>For this reason a</u> <u>man will leave his</u> <u>father and the</u> <u>mother and will</u> <u>stick to his wife</u>	<u>For this reason a</u> <u>man will leave his</u> <u>father and the</u> <u>mother and will</u> <u>stick to his wife, and</u> <u>they will be both in</u> <u>one flesh.</u>

What can we see? If we divide the text of Genesis into three parts (a, b, c), we see that

- reading i. copied only Gen. 2:24a, except for the personal pronoun *αὐτοῦ* (his) that accompanies *μητέρα* (mother), as if this pronoun were redundant and the personal pronoun that accompanies "father" also covered mother,
- reading ii. copied v. 24a (without the *αὐτοῦ* that accompanies *μητέρα*) and v. 24b
- Mt 19:5 copied v. 24 in full (without the *αὐτοῦ* that accompanies *μητέρα*), but eliminating the preposition *πρὸς* (towards, with respect to) to use instead the dative (to [his wife])
- Finally, reading iii. seems to have copied part a and b of Mt 19:5.

Let's look at possible scenarios to explain the three readings.

- For reading i., there are two possible scenarios: either this reading reflects Mark's autograph text, or a copyist had the text reflected in reading ii. before his eyes, but for some unknown reason wanted to shorten it to keep only the equivalent of Gen 2:24a.
- For reading ii. there are two possible scenarios: either this text reflects Mark's autograph copy, or the copyist had the text reflected in reading i. in front of him and, seeing a reference to Gen 2:24, decided to complete this reference, which seemed incomplete in Mark; indeed, we can't really separate "leave father and mother" and "stick to his wife", which form a whole. On the other hand, he didn't feel the need to copy Gn 2:24c ("and they will be both in one flesh"), which is not essential to the argument.
- For reading iii. the likely scenario is a harmonization with Mt 19:5, betrayed by the use of the dative with the unique expression "to his wife".

Let's apply our criteria for internal evidence.

- i. We can immediately eliminate reading iii. which is a clear case of harmonization.
 - ii. The criterion of *lectio brevior* leads us to eliminate reading ii. in favor of the short version of reading i., since the tendency of copyists is to add, not to subtract. And it's unlikely that the short version of reading i. is a case of omission, especially as Mark quotes a well-known passage from Genesis.
 - iii. We could add the criterion of *lectio difficilior probabilior* to the choice of reading i., as we would have expected Mark to quote Gn 2:24 more fully. But this is not a total surprise, as Mark has accustomed us to a sometimes rough style.
- d. The final decision

In the external evidence analysis we concluded that reading i. had a slight advantage due to the quality of its manuscripts. Internal evidence analysis using the criteria of *lectio brevior* and *lectio difficilior probabilior* confirms that reading i. probably reflects Mark's autograph text.

Biblical scholars are divided on the subject. The Greek New Testament opted for the western text of reading ii, but with a certainty rating of {C} (i.e. the editors had difficulty in reaching a decision). The KJV, NIV, ASB and NRSV opted for reading ii, while the NASB opted for reading i. On the French side, the Nouvelle Traduction de la Bible, TOB, Maredsous 1950 and Louis Segond 1910 have opted for version ii (Western text), while the Jerusalem Bible 1998 and André Chouraqui have opted for version i (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus).

C. Luke 10: 15

Here we have a passage from the Q Document. Both Matthew and Luke, this verse offers two different readings.

- a. The variant readings
 - i. *καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως τοῦ ἔδου καταβῆσῃ* (And you, Capernaum, shall not be lifted up to heaven; **you shall be descended** to Hades.)
 - ii. *καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως τοῦ ἔδου καταβιβασθῆσῃ* (And you, Capernaum, shall not be lifted up to heaven; **you shall be brought down** to Hades.)

These variant readings therefore refer to two verbs: *katabainō* (to descend) and *katabibazō* (to bring down). Which one probably reflects the autograph manuscript?

- b. External evidence
 - i. The verb *katabainō* is supported by papyrus P⁷⁵ (3rd c.), codex Vaticanus (4th c.), Syriac translation 4th/5th c., codex Bezae (5th c.), Latin translation 5th c., Armenian (5th c.), Ethiopian (5th c.), Georgian (5th c.), minuscules 579 (13th c.) and 1342 (13th c.)
 - ii. The verb *katabibazō* is supported by papyrus P⁴⁵ (3rd c.), codex Sinaiticus (4th c.), codex Alexandrinus (5th c.), codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th c.), codex Washingtonianus (4th/5th c.), codex Sangallensis (9th c.), Sangallensis (9th c.), Koridethi (9th c.), Zacynthius (6th c.), Athous Lavrensis (9th), 0115 (9th / 10th c.), families 1 (12th - 14th c.) and 13 (11th - 15th c.), as well as a considerable number of minuscule manuscripts (11th-15th c.), manuscripts from the Byzantine tradition of the 2nd millennium, the lectionaries of the Greek Church, the Vulgate (4th-5th c.), a dozen old Latin translations (4th - 7th c.), the Peshitta (5th c.) and the Syriac harklensis version (year 616), Sahidic and Bohemian Coptic translations (from the 3rd c.).

Let's apply our criteria.

- i. Let's consider the quality of the manuscripts. Both readings enjoy the support of the most prestigious: *katabainō* is backed by the Vaticanus, and *katabibazō* by the Sinaiticus. Reading ii., on the other hand, is supported by nine codexes or uncials, while reading i. is supported by only two (Vaticanus and Bezae).
- ii. In terms of antiquity, both readings are supported by 3rd-century papyri and 4th- and 5th-century manuscripts.
- iii. The criterion of number of manuscripts clearly favours reading ii. which is supported by around 70 manuscripts, compared with barely ten or so for reading i.
- iv. Finally, let's consider the family of manuscripts to which these witnesses belong. In reading i., the Alexandrian text family is present in papyrus P⁷⁵, Vaticanus and minuscule 579, the Western text family is present in codex Bezae, and the Byzantine family is present in minuscule 1342. If we now consider reading ii., the Alexandrian family is present through papyrus P⁴⁵, codex Sinaiticus and codex Zacynthius,

the Caesarean family through minuscule 28 as well as through the f¹ and f¹³ set of minuscules, and finally the Byzantine family through codex Alexandrinus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, Washingtonianus, Sangallensis, Koridethi, and Athous Lavrensis. Note that reading ii. is not present in the family of Western texts.

External evidence analysis gives a slight advantage to reading ii. due to the quality and number of manuscripts. Moreover, it is revealing that reading ii. is not present in the family of Western texts, a family renowned for introducing modifications to manuscripts. Let's now turn to the analysis of internal criticism.

c. Internal evidence

Before examining the various scenarios for explaining the two readings, let's ask the question: might there be a reference here to a passage in the OT? When we search the Septuagint for the words *katabainō* (to descend) and *katabibazō* (to bring down), we come across two important passages: Is 14:15 for the term *katabainō* and Ez 31:16 for the term *katabibazō*. To complete our analysis, we need to include the parallel text of Mt 11:23, which also takes up the Q source, and which presents the same problem of textual criticism; so, as the decision has not yet been made, we have kept the two possibilities together: to descend / to bring down.

Isa 14: 14-15 (LXX)	Ezek 31: 16b (LXX)	Mt 11: 23	Lk 10: 15
Context: The king of Babylon hopes to ascend to heaven to establish his throne, but God will see to it that he descends to Sheol instead.	Context: The parable of the great cedar, which is the image of the power of Egypt, whose top reached (<i>hypsoō</i>) to heaven, and under its branches the multitude of peoples dwell; but God will bring this power down to Sheol.	Context: Jesus reproached the towns in which he had performed most of his miracles, because their inhabitants had not changed their lives.	Context: Jesus declares that on the Day of Judgment the inhabitants of Sodom will be treated less severely than the inhabitants of the towns that refused to receive him.
ἀναβήσομαι ἐπάνω τῶν νεφελῶν, ἔσομαι ὁμοιος τῷ ὑψίστῳ. νῦν δὲ εἰς ἕδου καταβήση καὶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς.	ἀπὸ τῆς φωνῆς τῆς πτώσεως αὐτοῦ ἐσειέθησαν τὰ ἔθνη, ὅτε κατεβίβαζον αὐτὸν εἰς ἕδου μετὰ τῶν καταβαινόντων εἰς λάκκον	καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως τοῦ ἕδου καταβήση / καταβίβασθῆσῃ	καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως τοῦ ἕδου καταβήση / καταβίβασθῆσῃ
I will ascend (<i>anabainō</i>) above the clouds; I will be like the Most High. And now you have descended into Hades, and into the foundations of the earth.	At the sound of your fall the nations trembled, for I brought you down into Hades with those who had gone down into the abyss.	And you, Capernaum, shall not be lifted up (<i>hypsoō</i>) to heaven; you shall be (descended / brought down) to Hades	And you, Capernaum, shall not be lifted up (<i>hypsoō</i>) to heaven; you shall be (descended / brought down) to Hades

Since in both Matthew and Luke we are dealing with a text from the Q source, the question becomes twofold: which verb was in the Q source, and which of Matthew or Luke modified the original verb? First, let's settle the question of the original verb in the Q source: *katabainō* or *katabibazō*?

If the author of the Q source had been inspired by Isa 14:15 in the Septuagint version, he would have chosen the parallel pair "ascend" (*anabainō*) and "descend" (*katabainō*) found in Isaiah's text ("I will ascend [*anabainō*] above the clouds; I will be like the Most High; And now you have descended [*katabainō*] into Hades, and into the foundations of the earth"). However, the beginning of the sentence, reproduced by both Matthew and Luke, uses the verb *hypsoō* (to lift up, exalt) instead: "And you Capernaum to heaven you will not be lift up (*hypsoō*)". When we consider Ezek 31:14-15, we observe precisely the pairing "to be lifted up" (*hypsoō*) and "to bring down" (*katabibazō*): "so that none of the trees by the water would be lifted up (*hypsoō*) because of his size... At the sound of his fall, the nations trembled; for I brought him down (*katabibazō*) into Hades with those who had gone down into the abyss". There is therefore a strong probability that the author of Q Document was inspired by Ezek 31:14-15 to speak of Capernaum's fate, and therefore used the pair "to lift up" (*hypsoō*) - "to bring down" (*katabibazō*).

If we accept this probability, what are the possible scenarios that explain our two readings?

- i. Luke, as is his wont, would have copied the Q Document with *katabibazō* as is, and Matthew, as he often does, modifies the Q Document. Indeed, Matthew may have judged that, to speak of movement from heaven to earth, one always uses the verb "to descend" (*katabainō*): (Mt 3:16) "behold, the heavens being opened: he saw the Spirit of God descending (*katabainō*) like a dove upon him"; (Mt 28:2) "the Angel of the Lord descended (*katabainō*) from heaven and came to roll away the stone". And since Matthew

certainly knew the parable of Isaiah 14:3-23 and the image of the descent into Hades, he would have felt justified in making this modification to the Q Document. But later, a scribe, aware of the parallel Mt 11:23 || Lk 10:15, would have harmonized the two versions.

- ii. We can imagine the opposite scenario. Luke, copying the Q Document, would have replaced *katabibazō* by *katabainō*, knowing the text of Isa 14, 14-15, while Matthew would have simply copied the text of the Q Document as it stands. But later, a scribe, knowing the parallel Mt 11:23 || Lk 10:15, would have harmonized the two versions

Let's apply our criteria for internal evidence analysis.

- i. The only criterion we can use is harmonization. Unfortunately, it is of little use in our case, as the double reading is also found in Matthew, so the scribe may have harmonized Luke with Matthew, or vice versa, harmonized Matthew with Luke.
 - ii. So we need to step outside our usual criteria to consider Luke and Matthew as a whole, and their use of the Q Document in their respective gospels. Even if both evangelists occasionally modify what they copy from the Q Document, we note that it is Luke who tends to respect the Q Document's wording the most, and Matthew who modifies it the most often; a good example concerns the account of the Beatitudes and the Pater, where Luke seems to have respected the original wording of these Q Document texts the best. We can therefore say that it is likely that Luke respected the Q Document formulation with *katabibazō*, and it was Matthew, under the inspiration of Isa 14:3-23, who replaced *katabibazō* with *katabainō*. Subsequent copyists sought to harmonize the two accounts.
- d. The final decision

The external evidence analysis concluded that reading ii. with *katabibazō* probably reflected the autograph text because of the quality of the manuscripts and their number. The internal critic also concludes that reading ii. is the most likely, since it would reflect the Q source and Luke would have respected its wording.

In conclusion, let's consider the choices made by the biblical scholars. First of all, let's express our astonishment when biblical scholars opt for the term *katabainō* in both Luke and Matthew, a highly unlikely scenario; indeed, this scenario assumes that a copyist would have introduced the term *katabibazō* for either evangelist out of nowhere, a term that clarifies nothing and harmonizes nothing. Yet this was the choice made by the editorial committee of the Greek New Testament and the Novum Testamentum Graece. It seems to me that the parallel with Isa 14:14-15 had to great of an influence. The reverse scenario is also unlikely with *katabibazō* for both evangelists, as it would be difficult to explain the introduction of the term *katabainō* by a copyist. Let's turn to our various bibles.

Tranlation	Matthew 11: 23	Luke 10: 15
English Standard Version	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)
King James Version	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)	<i>katabibazō</i> (to thrust down)
New American Standard Bible	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)
New International Version	<i>katabainō</i> (to go down)	<i>katabainō</i> (to go down)
New Revised Standard Version	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)	<i>katabibazō</i> (to bring down)
Bible de Jérusalem	<i>katabainō</i> (descendre)	<i>katabainō</i> (descendre)
Chouraqui	<i>katabibazō</i> (précipiter)	<i>katabibazō</i> (précipiter)
Louis Second 1910	<i>katabainō</i> (abaïsser)	<i>katabainō</i> (abaïsser)
Maredsous	<i>katabainō</i> (crouler)	<i>katabibazō</i> (précipiter)
Nouvelle Traduction de la Bible	<i>katabainō</i> (retomber)	<i>katabainō</i> (descendre)
Traduction œcuménique de la Bible	<i>katabainō</i> (descendre)	<i>katabainō</i> (descendre)

What do we see? Most French translations have opted for *katabainō* (to descend), and most English translations have opted for *katabibazō* (to bring down). What's most surprising is that all these translations have opted for the same verb in Luke and Matthew, with the exception of the Maredsous Bible, which has made the same choice as ours.

D. Acts 28: 13

a. The variant readings

Let's recall the context. Paul has just stayed in Malta. He sets sail for the east coast of Sicily, for Syracuse, and then sets sail again for Rhegium, two hundred kilometers further on, on the tip of the Italian boot facing Sicily.

- i. ὅθεν **περιελόντες** κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον (from where, **having took off**, we came to Rhegium). Note that the verb *perielontes* is the verb *periaireō* meaning: to take off or away.
- ii. ὅθεν **περιελθόντες** κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον (from where, **having come around**, we came to Rhegium). Note that the verb *perielthontes* is the verb *perierchomai* meaning: to come about or around.
- iii. ὅθεν **προελθόντες** κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Ῥήγιον (from where, **having come forward**, we came to Rhegium). Note that the verb *proelthontes* is the verb *proerchomai* meaning : to come forward.

b. External evidence

- i. Reading i. is supported by the codexes Sinaiticus first hand (4th c.), Vaticanus (4th c.), and Athous Lavrensis (9th c.), lectionary 597 (10th c.) and the Coptic Bohemian translation (4th - 9th c.).
- ii. Reading ii. is supported by papyrus P⁷⁴ (7th c.), codexes Sinaiticus second correction (4th c.) and Alexandrinus (5th c.), 048 (5th c.) and 066 (6th c.), by Byzantine codexes Angelicus (9th c.) and Porphyrianus (6th), by some fifteen minuscules (9th - 15th c.), all the Greek lectionaries, the Syriac translations of the Peshitta (early 5th c.) and Harklensis (year 616), a Slavonic translation, all the old Latin translations (4th to 12th c.), the Vulgate and John Chrysostom.
- iii. Reading iii. is supported only by the lectionary 1441 (13th c.) and the Ethiopian translation.

Let's apply our criteria.

- i. Let's consider the quality of the manuscripts. For reading i. we must discard the Sinaiticus, as the corrected copy supports reading ii. All that remains is the Athous Lavrensis codex and, above all, the Vaticanus, which has some value. For reading ii, six codices support it, in particular the Sinaiticus and the Alexandrianus. The support for reading iii. is so poor that it is not worth considering.
- ii. In terms of antiquity, both readings are supported by 4th-century manuscripts (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus).
- iii. In terms of number, reading ii. is supported by a considerable number of manuscripts, while reading i. receives minimal support.
- iv. Reading i. is supported by the family of Alexandrian texts in the codex Vaticanus and by the family of Byzantine texts in the codex Athous Lavrensis. As for reading ii., it is supported by the Alexandrian family of texts through papyrus P⁷⁴, codexes Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and 048; it is supported by the Western family through codex 066 and minuscule 2818; it is supported by the Byzantine family of texts through codexes Angelicus and Porphyrianus, the Greek lectionary set and several minuscules.

External evidence analysis favors the version offered by reading ii. because of the slight advantage in manuscript quality, the large number of manuscripts supporting it and its presence in a larger number of text type families.

c. Internal evidence

Let's consider possible scenarios to explain our three readings.

- i. Let's assume that reading i. (*perielontes*) is the autograph text. A copyist has found this verb, which means: to take off or away, incomprehensible in a context where Paul is on his way to Rhegium. Moreover, he probably imagined that there had been an oversight in the Greek text where the "θ" in the verb *περιελθόντες* had been forgotten. So he made the appropriate correction, giving us reading ii. with *perielthontes* (having come around).
- ii. Conversely, let's assume that reading ii. (*perielthontes*) is the autograph reading. When copying the verb *περιελθόντες*, a scribe, perhaps a little sleepy, or still influenced by Ac 27:40 where he had copied shortly before the sentence: *καὶ τὰς ἀγκύρας περιελόντες* (and having taken off the anchors), forgot to transcribe the "θ", and so wrote, as in Ac 27, 40: *περιελόντες*, which gave us reading i.
- iii. Reading iii. is fairly self-explanatory. If the copyist had reading i. in front of him, he certainly found it incomprehensible and imagined that Luke was describing Paul moving from Syracuse to Rhegium, and so replaced the incomprehensible verb with the verb *proerchomai* (to come forward). If this copyist had reading ii. in front of him, but had no idea of the geography of the place, i.e. that the ship had to go around the Sicilian coast to get to Rhegium, he probably thought that the verb *proerchomai* (to come forward) would best explain what was happening.

Let's apply our criteria for internal evidence analysis.

- i. The harmonization criterion does not apply to the Acts of the Apostles, as we have no parallel text.
- ii. We could perhaps apply the *lectio difficilior probabilior* criterion, which would lead us to choose reading i., which gives us an almost incomprehensible sentence. However, as the difficult word could be explained by the copyist's carelessness in skipping a single letter, thereby introducing a new word, we need to use other criteria.
- iii. Let's use our crite[rion for carelessness, where we suggested using other passages reflecting the evangelist's style. And first of all, let's ask the question: is reading i. with *perielontes* (to take off or away) really possible? Biblical scholars who have opted for this reading, such as NRSV, have translated it as: "to weigh anchor". To translate in this way, the translator have had to add the word "anchor" to the text and completely change the meaning of the verb. But in doing so, he contradicts his translation a little earlier of Acts 27:40, where we encounter the same verb: (*καὶ τὰς ἀγκύρας περιελόντες*) "They took off the anchors". What do we see? On the one hand, when the action of the verb *periaireō* concerns the anchor, Luke makes this clear by explicitly using the word. On the other hand, in Acts 27:40 the ship is in peril and so the crew decides to get rid of the anchors, and then the word *periaireō* (to take off or away) is perfectly suited to the situation. How can one, on the one hand, as the NRSV does, translate *periaireō* as "to cast off the anchors", and then, a few verses later, as "to weigh [anchor]", where the anchor remains with the ship? This isolated translation cannot be accepted, especially as the word "anchor" does not appear in Acts 28:13. We must therefore conclude that Luke probably used the verb *perierchomai* (to come around, reading ii.) in a context where the ship is "rounding" Sicily on its way to Rhegium.
- d. The final decision

External evidence analysis favors the reading ii. due to the slight advantage of manuscript quality, the large number of manuscripts supporting it, and internal evidence analysis, through reference to another passage from Luke, also favors reading ii.

It should be noted that the editors of the Novum Testamentum Graece and the Greek New Testament chose reading i., but with certainty rating of {C} (i.e. the editors had difficulty in reaching a decision). This choice can probably be explained by a rather rigid application of the *lectio difficilior probabilior* criterion and by an overvaluation of the Vaticanus testimony.

What was the choice of translators for our Bibles? Here's the table:

Translation	Acts 28: 13a
English Standard Version	<i>perielthontes</i> (we made a circuit)
King James Version	<i>perielthontes</i> (we fetched a compass)
New American Standard Bible	<i>perielthontes</i> (we sailed around)
New International Version	<i>perielthontes</i> (we set sail)
New Revised Standard Version	<i>perielontes</i> (we weighed anchor)
Bible de Jérusalem	<i>perielthontes</i> (longeant la côte)
Chouraqui	<i>perielthontes</i> (louvoyant)
Louis Second 1910	<i>perielthontes</i> (suivant la côte)
Maredsous	<i>perielthontes</i> (en suivant la côte)
Nouvelle Traduction de la Bible	<i>perielontes</i> (levant l'ancre)
Traduction œcuménique de la Bible (TOB)	<i>perielthontes</i> (bordant la côte)

As can be seen, the majority of translators have opted for reading ii, *perielthontes*, the only exceptions being the Nouvelle Traduction de la Bible on the French-speaking side, and the NRSV on the English-speaking side, which we have bolded.

2. Setting the context and units of analysis

- A. [The general context](#)
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Context plays an key role in clarifying the meaning of a text or a word. It is therefore an important step in biblical analysis. We can proceed in two stages to establish the context of a text, first by considering the general context of the whole Gospel, then the immediate context of the unit of analysis.

A. The general context

When we analyze a biblical text, we always analyze a particular author and his work. We can assume that the evangelists didn't simply collect scattered traditions and put them together randomly, one after the other. Any writer who proposes a story follows a certain plan, even if this plan is not a treatise with a tight logic; at the very least, it has a starting point, an end point and a general idea of the path to follow to reach the end point.

1. Mark

According to the widely accepted theory among biblical scholars, Mark was the first to publish a gospel, which Matthew and Luke subsequently had in their hands. Mark proposes a general plan, to be followed by Matthew and Luke, in which everything begins with the preaching of John the Baptist in the Jordan region, followed by the baptism and ministry of Jesus in Galilee, until he decides to go to Jerusalem, where he is arrested, tried, crucified and buried. It's hard to spot a strict plan in Mark's Gospel, where scenes often follow each other only linked by "hook words". At the very least, biblical scholars distinguish two periods in his Gospel:

- first, the proclamation of God's reign with the choice of his disciples, followed by the presentation of reactions to this proclamation,
- then the long ascent to Jerusalem, punctuated by announcements of the passion, followed by the long account of Jesus' last week.

Here's a proposal on [the structure of Mark's Gospel](#).

2. Matthew

Matthew takes up this general plan. But as a Jewish Christian, he probably found Mark's presentation a little "disheveled". So he restructured everything, introducing more logical sequences and improving the style. For example, he grouped many of Jesus' words into five major discourses, a way of presenting a Christian version of the Jewish Torah (i.e. the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible). Even most of the miracles are grouped together to follow this first discourse. As in Mark's case, his Gospel can be divided into two parts, the second of which is punctuated by announcements of the Passion, but which he introduces by recounting the death of John the Baptist, a way of also announcing Jesus' death.

A particularity of Matthew compared to Mark is that he presents an infancy narrative, based on a tradition also known in Luke. According to R.E. Brown, this infancy story was not an afterthought, but part of the original plan. There are four discernible units: the genealogy, the conception of Jesus, the Magi's visit to Bethlehem, the flight to Egypt and return to Nazareth. These four units seek to answer questions about Jesus' identity: who is he? how is he so? where was he born? where did he come from?

Here's a proposal on [the structure of Matthew's Gospel](#).

3. Luke

Luke also adopts Mark's general plan, but with his great Greek culture and refined pen, he takes the liberty of rewriting several scenes in his own way, sometimes grouping them together for reasons of clarity. And as his Gospel is only the first volume of his work, the Acts of the Apostles must also be considered in understanding his overall plan. Thus, geographical locations seem to be the common thread running through his plan: the ministry in Galilee, the very long ascent to Jerusalem, the stay in Jerusalem until his death and ascension, then the beginning of the Jerusalem community, followed by missionary activity outside Jerusalem, up to the creation of Christian communities all over the world and in Rome, the center of the world.

Luke also offers an infancy narrative based on an ancient tradition and very much inspired by the Old Testament. In fact, he intended to show how the Old Testament introduced the arrival of the Messiah. According to R.E. Brown, Luke added his infancy narrative after completing both his Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles. The infancy story enabled him to ensure a transition between Israel and Jesus, and offered him the same freedom in composition that he experienced with his Acts. He would have composed this story in two stages: in the first stage, he would have structured it around a parallel between John the Baptist and Jesus, each with an angel's announcement of conception, followed by the narration of their birth, circumcision, choice of name and a prophecy about their future; in the second stage, he would have added the various hymns that dot these two chapters, as well as the story of the young Jesus discovered in the temple.

Here's a proposal on [the structure of Luke's Gospel](#).

4. John

Finally, the Gospel according to John, the latest to be published, seems to be unaware of the existence of the other three Gospels, and so its plan is totally different from that of the Synoptics. Like the Synoptics, it can be divided into two main parts, the first marked by Jesus' teaching to a wide audience and his actions, the second marked by his imminent death. The first part is punctuated by the catchword "sign", which recounts six signs that are acts of power by Jesus, so much so that R.E. Brown gives this first part the title "Book of the Signs of Jesus". The second part takes place in the shadow of Jesus' departure, which the gospel calls his "glorification", so that R.E. Brown gives this second part the title "The Book of the Glorification of Jesus". This gospel is introduced by a Prologue, and contains at the end an appendix added after the fact.

Here's a proposal on [the structure of John's Gospel](#).

5. Examples of contextualization

How important is it to place a text in its general context? This helps determine the literary genre and atmosphere in which the story's meaning should be interpreted. Let's look at a few examples.

- a. Take Mt 5:13-16: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its properties...". This pericope is set in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, the first of Jesus' five great discourses, in which he is presented as the new Moses, giving not the Ten Commandments, but the charter of the whole Christian life, which begins with the Beatitudes. This broad context allows us to grasp that Matthew, in this Sermon on the Mount, is defining Christian identity.
- b. Now consider Mt 18:15-19: "If your brother does what is evil against you, go to him alone and show him his fault. If he listens to you, you have won your brother...". The general context is that of Jesus' fourth great discourse on fraternal life. The scene takes place after the 2nd passion proclamation, and the prospect of Jesus' departure raises the question of how Christian communities are to be organized. Thus, this fourth discourse becomes a form of mini-canon law that structures the Church, and our pericope an element of this canon law.
- c. Mk 6:1-6 provides us with another example: "Jesus left this place and went into his own country; his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue...". When we look at Mark's Gospel as a whole, we see two main parts: the first centered on Jesus' preaching in Galilee, ending with Peter's confession, and the second, marked by Jesus' approaching passion, centered on Jesus' teaching of his disciples. Now, Mk 6:1-6 belongs to the first part, and in this part three groups come into play: 1) the people as a whole, 2) Jesus' family and the people of his homeland, and finally 3) his disciples. Mk 6:1-6 is related to group 2), which begins in 3:7 with Jesus' family wanting to intervene because they think he has gone mad, and ends with our pericope, in which Jesus expresses surprise at their lack of faith. Thus, the general atmosphere is that of the relationship of Jesus' family and the people of his milieu with him. For Mark, closeness to Jesus does not contribute to faith in him - quite the contrary.
- d. We cannot understand the pericope Mk 10:13-16 ("Some people brought children to Jesus so that he could touch them, but the disciples spoke sternly to them...") without first placing it in its general context. Indeed, we are in the 2nd part of Mark's Gospel, after Peter's confession, where Jesus reserves his teaching for those who have believed in him: the prospect of his departure leads him to give instructions on how to live in the Christian community. It is likely that one of the questions raised by the first Christians concerned the place to be given to children at gatherings, whether in relation to the Eucharist or baptism. Mark, no doubt drawing on

tradition about Jesus' attitude to children, puts it this way: "Let the children come to me...", i.e. they have their place in the Christian community.

- e. Let's end with Lk 19:10-28, the parable of the mines. Jesus' ministry follows a geographical itinerary: first in Galilee, then in ch. 9 Jesus sets out for Jerusalem over 10 chapters, then in ch. 19 he arrives in Jerusalem, where he will live out his last moments and experience his ascension. In this long ascent to Jerusalem from ch. 9 to ch. 19, Luke has brought together a series of words and events all his own. And throughout this ascent, the leitmotif "he was on his way" recurs again and again, suggesting the theme of the Christian journey. Our parable about the mines is the conclusion of this section. What does it mean? After concluding his teaching on the Christian life, Luke's Jesus issues a warning to put the teaching received into practice, and thus make it bear fruit, or risk rendering the teaching totally useless.

B. Establishing the unit of analysis and the immediate context

When analyzing particular verses, it's important to clearly delineate the units of analysis and to determine where a specific pericope begins and ends; this work helps to better target the meaning of a text. How do we go about this analysis?

1. Location

One of the best indicators of the start of a new sequence is the geographical reference: Jesus leaves a place or arrives at a place. This is the most frequent indicator.

For example in Mk 10: 1, Mark writes

"He left that place and went to the region of Judea and[a] beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him, and, as was his custom, he again taught them".

Then, in Mk 10:17, we have a new geographical indication, heralding a new sequence:

"As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him"

Thus, Mk 10:1-16 forms a unit of analysis.

2. Time

Another indicator of the start of a new sequence is a reference to time: "Then came the time of...", or "one day, when Jesus...", or "at that time", or an indication of a specific time. For example,

- Lk 1: 57: "Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth"
- Lk 10: 21: "At that very hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit"
- Jn 2: 1: "On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee"
- Jn 10: 22: "At that time the Festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem"

3. "After these things"

Sometimes the evangelist indicates that we are moving on to another sequence of events with the expression: "after these things" (*meta tauta*), or again, "After having said such and such a thing" or "it came to pass..." (*egeneto*). For instance,

- Lk 5: 1: "Then, it came to pass (*egeneto*) as the crowd was pressing..."
- Lk 7: 11: "And it came to pass (*egeneto*) on the next day..."
- Lk 10: 1: "Then, after these things (*meta tauta*), the Lord appointed..."
- Lk 11: 1: "And it came to pass (*egeneto*) as Jesus was praying..."
- Jn 21: 1: "After these things (*meta tauta*), Jesus revealed himself again to his disciples..."

4. The Literary Genre

A literary genre is a good delimiter. For example, a parable clearly has a beginning and an end, just like a prayer or a hymn, or a speech or a controversy, or an exhortation or parenthesis, or a miracle story, or a genealogy, or a summary (the evangelist gives a general summary of Jesus' activity) or a maxim (e.g. Mt 23:12), or beatitudes (Mt 5:2-12).

- Mt 13: 3: "And he told them many things in parables, saying...". A parable has a beginning and an end.
- Lk 2: 13: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,[a] praising God and saying...". A hymn or canticle has a beginning and an end.

- Matthew presents us with five of Jesus' great discourses, like the one on the mountain, which begins like this: "Jesus spoke and taught them..." (5: 1) and ends with: "When Jesus had finished these words..." (7: 28). Matthew has clearly delineated Jesus' discourse.
- Lk 6: 20: "Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God'". The beatitudes have a beginning and an end.
- Starting with Lk 6:27, Luke presents us with a series of exhortations with imperative verbs: "But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you". These exhortations clearly have a beginning and an end.

5. A Change of Scenery

Sometimes, a caesura is indicated by a change of scenery and new characters entering the scene or new listeners. Very often, the evangelist will introduce this new setting with a participle verb to indicate a new situation and a specific action by Jesus. For example,

- After discussing the first commandment with a scribe, Mark writes in Mk 12:35: "Jesus started again to speak and was teaching in the temple" (lit. "And having answered, he was saying teaching in the temple". The scenery has changed: the scribe has disappeared, we are now in the temple, and Jesus is once again teaching).
- Lk 14:34-35 ends with a comment to the crowd about salt that loses its taste. But 15:1 begins with "Tax collectors and sinners all came to Jesus to listen to him. The Pharisees and scribes criticized Jesus". So, with Lk 15:1, the scene has completely changed and new characters have appeared.
- After a reflection on prayer, we read in Lk 11:14: "And Jesus was casting out a demon that was mute...". We move from a teaching to the disciples to a new setting, that of Jesus' exorcism, introduced by a participle.

Here's other examples from Mt 2 where the participle is used:

- 2: 1: "In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem" (litt.: Then, the Jesus having been born in Bethleem of Judea...).
- 2: 13: "Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said," (litt. The magi having withdrawn)

The participle verb is used to introduce a new sequence with new actors. In this way, 2: 1-12 forms a unit of analysis.

6. "Behold"

Sometimes the evangelist, especially Matthew, introduces this change of scenery with the expression: "Behold" (*idou*). For examples :

- Mt 8: 2: "And behold (*idou*) there was a man with a skin disease who came to him and knelt before him..."
- Mt 9: 2: "And behold (*idou*) some people were carrying to him a paralyzed man lying on a stretcher..."
- Mt 15: 22: "And behold (*idou*) a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting..."
- Mt 19: 16: "And behold (*idou*) someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"
- Mt 26: 47: "As Jesus was still speaking, behold (*idou*) Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs..."
- Lk 2: 25: "And behold (*idou*) a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon"

7. "Then"

Sometimes a change of scene is introduced by the expression: "Then" (*tote*), especially Matthew's. For examples:

- Mt 2: 16: "Then, (*tote*) Herod seeing that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated"
- Mt 3: 13: "Then, (*tote*) Jesus comes from Galilee to Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him."
- Mt 4: 1: "Then, (*tote*) Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tested by the devil".
- Mt 9: 14: "Then, (*tote*) John's disciples approached him, saying..."
- Mt 11: 20: "Then, (*tote*) he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done"
- Mt 12: 22: "Then, (*tote*) they brought to him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute..."

8. The Content

Finally, sometimes the only way to delimit a unit of analysis is by its content, especially in a long discourse such as John's: the object of discussion has changed. For example,

- In Jn 15:18-25, Jesus talks about the world's hatred of him, then in 15:26-27 he talks about the Spirit and the disciples who will have to bear witness. Then, at the start of ch. 16, the subject changes, as Jesus now explains why he says a number of things in advance. Thus 15:26-27 forms a small unit of analysis on witnessing.
- In John 6, we have what is known as the discourse on the bread of life. This discourse can be subdivided into smaller units. From 6:25 onwards, we witness a dialogue between Jesus and the crowd. In the first part, the crowd tries to understand Jesus' words, and in 6:34 they say: "Lord, give us this bread always". But the tone changes in 6:41, when John writes: "The Jews criticized Jesus because he had said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven'". Jesus will try to answer until 6:51, then in 6:52 people ask a new question about "eating his flesh". Thus, 6:41-51 forms a small unit around a question and an answer.

Having said all this, it should be noted that the Catholic liturgy often proposes its own breakdown, sometimes with an amalgam of different verses, in order to focus on a particular theme. For example, for the 6th Sunday in Lent: Lk 6:17,20-26, the introduction to the Beatitudes was shortened; for the 4th Sunday in Lent: Lk 15:1-3,11-32, the introduction and only the third parable were kept; for the birth of John the Baptist: Lk 1:57-66,80, it has kept the narrative around his birth, to which it has added the general conclusion; for the 14th Ordinary Sunday of Year C: Lk 10:1-12,17-20, it has eliminated the section on the curses against Chorazin and Capernaum to remain focused on the mission; for the 3rd Sunday of Advent in Year C: Jn 1:6-8,19-28, it has eliminated anything that doesn't directly concern John the Baptist; for Pentecost in Year B: Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15, it has divided the text around the Paraclete; for the celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ in Year B: Mark 14:12-16,22-26, it has eliminated the announcement of Judas' betrayal to focus solely on Jesus' last supper; for the 22nd Ordinary Sunday in Year B: Mk 7:1-8,14-15,21-23, the details of the Pharisaic traditions that oppose God's commandments have been eliminated; for the First Sunday of Advent in year C: Luke 21:25-28,34-36, the reading on the fig tree in the announcement of the coming of the Son of Man has been eliminated; for the Baptism of the Lord in year C: Luke 3:15-16,21-22, the threats of John the Baptist have been eliminated.

The Catholic liturgy sometimes groups together several units of analysis to cover different aspects of a particular theme, as on the 27th Sunday of Ordinary Sunday in Year B: Mk 10:2-16, where the controversy over divorce was joined with a teaching to the disciples and the place of children.

C. The immediate context in the meaning of a pericope

A sentence can take on different meanings depending on the context in which it appears. For example, what does it mean when a mother says to her son: "I have to tell you the truth"? It all depends on the context. If the context is that of a discussion about biological ties and adoption, perhaps the mother intends to reveal to her son that he is the product of adoption. If the context is one in which the mother confesses her infidelities, perhaps the mother intends to reveal to her son that his current father is not his biological father. If the context is one of marital difficulties, perhaps the mother intends to reveal to her son that she is contemplating separation. The same is true of biblical analysis: understanding the immediate context is crucial to understanding the meaning of a verse or pericope.

1. The use of Q Document as a typical example

The Q Document provides an ideal case for examining the impact of immediate context on the meaning of a pericope. In fact, this source, used by Matthew and Luke, seems like a binder of Jesus' words from which the evangelists draw, and which they place throughout their writings according to the needs of their catechesis. Depending on where a word is placed, it takes on a different meaning. Let's take a closer look.

a. Mt 15: 14 || Lk 6: 39 : can blind lead the blind

Matthew has set this word of Jesus in the context of a controversy with the Pharisees, who are shocked that the disciples do not wash their hands with water before the meal, and he presents it as Jesus' affirmation that the Pharisees are blind leading other blind people, and so will fall into a pit, i.e. they are going nowhere.

Luke inserts this word of Jesus into the context of his speech on the plain, following an exhortation not to judge others, and introduces the parable where someone sees the speck in his brother's eye, but not the beam in his own. The blind man is therefore the brother who is unaware of the obstacles to his good judgment.

b. Mt 10: 24-25a || Lk 6: 40: disciple not above teacher.

Matthew inserted these words in a speech addressed to the disciples returning from mission, whom Jesus asks not to be surprised to encounter opposition and persecution. Jesus is thus saying: if they persecuted me, they will persecute you too.

In Luke, this word follows the previous image of the blind man who cannot lead another blind man, but is followed by the statement: "But every well-trained disciple will be like his teacher". From then on, the disciple

who becomes a master will no longer be blind, and will in turn be able to guide others. So Luke introduced this disciple-master comparison to support the need for apprenticeship.

- c. Mt 12: 33b.34b.35 || Lk 6: 44a.45: By the fruit the tree is known. For from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks

Matthew uses this logion in a speech by Jesus to the Pharisees, who accuse Jesus of casting out demons through Beelzebul, to tell them that they cannot say good things, for they are evil, as the diseased tree produces diseased fruit.

Luke inserts this logion into Jesus' discourse on the plain, where he presents the charter of the Christian life, after exhorting the Christian not to judge and to remove the beam from his own eye before seeing the speck in his brother's. This logion then becomes an observation on the fact that a good man professes from his treasure the good, an evil man professes from his treasure the evil, for what a person says is a reflection of his heart. So we understand that the heart must first be transformed by God's word before it can bear good fruit, i.e. good judgment on one's brother.

- d. Mt 7: 18,20,16b || Lk 6: 43-44 : It's not a quality tree making a rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree making a quality fruit.

Matthew placed this logion in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, presenting the charter of the Christian life and addressing the problem posed by the prophets in the Christian community who performed an important function, but were of unequal value, hence the need to sort them out. Matthew uses the image of the tree and its fruit to propose a criterion for discernment: "By their fruit you will know them," i.e. their deeds.

Luke inserts this logion into Jesus' discourse on the plain, at the point where he has just used the image of the speck and the beam in the eye, and so the logion operates a transition between, on the one hand, the affirmation that we must first look at our own shortcomings represented by the beam, and on the other, the reason why we must proceed in this way: the fruit that is judgment proceeds from the tree that is the person, and just as the good or bad tree gives different fruit, the good or bad man produces a different judgment.

- e. Mt 13: 16-17 || Lk 10: 23-24: "Blessed are the eyes observing what you observe..."

In Matthew, this logion was inserted into Jesus' discourse in parables, when he explains to his disciples why he speaks in parables, quoting Isa 6:10: "lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears..."; in contrast, the disciples are those who see and hear the message of the parables.

In Luke, this logion is inserted when the seventy-two disciples return from their mission and tell Jesus that they have experienced demons being subjected to them. For Jesus, this meant that his disciplines had seen the reign of God at work, and so he said to them: "Blessed are the eyes..."

- f. Mt 12: 43-45 || Lk 11: 24-26: Unclean spirit gone out of someone returns and brings seven others, making worse

Matthew inserts this logion in the context of a series of disputes with the Pharisees, and more particularly after Jesus' reproach for asking for a sign, reflecting their lack of conversion. From then on, the story of the return of the unclean spirit becomes a description of their condition. And by adding at the end the phrase: "So shall this evil generation also be" (v. 26b), Matthew clearly associates the man inhabited by seven unclean spirits with this generation of Pharisees.

Luke, for his part, places this pericope in the context of Jesus' exorcisms, attributed by some to Beelzebul, but which Jesus associates with the arrival of God's reign and the strong man who reduces Satan to impotence. The story of the return of the unclean spirit is therefore intended to express that this victory over Satan is not guaranteed for ever: if, since the departure of the unclean spirit, the word of God has not taken root and fructified, there is a great risk that the unclean spirit will return with even greater virulence. This interpretation is confirmed by the following account of the true disciple ("Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it", Lk 11:28).

- g. Mt 6: 22-23 || Lk 11: 34a-35: the lamp of the body that is the eye

Note that in the Semitic world, the eye is understood as the organ of discernment, and is therefore linked to one's orientation in life and to one's heart. As for the body, it refers to a person's entire being.

Matthew placed these words of Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount following a warning about riches: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... but... in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:19-21). From then on, the "simple" eye, which is liberal, generous and able to give, is opposed to the "evil" eye, which is envious, miserly and reluctant to give.

In Luke, on the other hand, the eye/body theme follows that of the lamp and belongs to the context of the sign that is Jesus. So Luke offers an explanation for the acceptance or rejection of the sign that is Jesus: the "simple" eye, i.e. upright and frank, is able to see this sign, while the evil eye is unable to do so. Hence Luke's conclusion: examine whether the light in you is not darkness.

- h. Mt 6: 19-21 || Lk 12: 33-34 no treasures on earth but in heaven.

Matthew placed this logion in his Sermon on the Mount, after Jesus had shown the attitude to adopt towards the three great practices of Judaism: almsgiving, prayer and fasting; each time, Jesus insists that these practices must be done in secret, and the Father, who sees in secret, will see to it that they are followed up. From then on, talk of a treasure in heaven is a logical follow-up: every action is aimed at pleasing God, who sees all and forgets nothing.

Luke, for his part, inserts this logion after the one inviting us to avoid worries and trust in God's providence, and thus logically opens onto the idea that accumulating possessions is totally useless, and that it is therefore better to give them in alms, and that the only riches are in heaven

- i. Mt 24: 43-44,45-51 || Lk 12: 39-40,42-46 householder and thief; faithful servant preparing for master's coming

Matthew places it in his eschatological discourse, when Jesus is in Jerusalem, a few days before his death. Jesus has just affirmed that no one knows the day and hour of the Son of Man's coming, and gives the example of the flood in Noah's time, which happened without anyone doubting anything, before exhorting us to keep watch. Thus, the context is one of catastrophe, where we must avoid being caught unprepared. This atmosphere continues with the image of the thief in our pericope.

Luke has placed this pericope within a series of teachings by Jesus as he walks towards Jerusalem, which he will reach only ten chapters later, where the legacy he wants to leave his disciples on the Christian life is concentrated. He has just exhorted them (Lk 12:35) to stay in their work clothes and keep their lamps lit to welcome the Master back from the wedding feast, whatever the time of night. So the first parable, though about a thief, is set in the positive context of the master's return from his wedding feast.

- j. Mt 10: 34-36 || Lk 12: 51-53 : Jesus did not come to bring peace but sword; divisions of family

Matthew inserted this pericope at the end of his missionary discourse in ch. 10, after warning his envoys that they would face persecution and have to bear witness before men. From then on, this pericope means that they need not be surprised, for it is the very nature of Jesus' action and message to create such a situation.

In Luke, this pericope follows the parable about the steward who is responsible for feeding the members of the household. And to ensure a smooth transition, Luke adds a logion in which Jesus expresses the meaning of his mission, that of lighting a fire on earth, i.e. the sending of the Holy Spirit which will be linked to his baptism, i.e. his death. From then on, our pericope goes on to explain the meaning of this fire of the Spirit, a transforming force that will be a source of division, with some refusing it. All this only accentuates the demands of the responsibility entrusted to the steward of the house.

- k. Mt 5: 25-26 || Lk 12: 58-59 settling before going before the magistrate

Matthew placed this pericope in his Sermon on the Mount, after a call to go beyond the commandment not to kill by refusing to get angry with your brother, to call him a "fool" or a "madman". Then comes the rule: "When you go to present your offering at the altar, if you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and first go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and present your offering" (Mt 5:23-24). In this way, our pericope becomes an example of reconciliation with one's brother, in order to be able to present one's offering to God. This reconciliation thus has a moral and religious dimension.

In Luke's case, the pericope follows Jesus' call to judge each situation and react to life's different events, like the farmer who knows how to discern the weather. To make sure that his reader uses this criterion of interpretation, he introduces our pericope with the words: "Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?" (Lk 12:57). This pericope is followed by the presentation of two catastrophes, Pilate's massacre of the Galileans and the collapse of the Tower of Siloam, which are to be interpreted as a call to conversion. Thus, the conflict with an adversary in our pericope must be interpreted as a call to change one's attitude while there is still time. The urgency is imposed by the prospect of the final judgment.

- l. Mt 22: 2-10 || Lk 14: 16-24 a great banquet, invitees make excuses, others invited

Matthew's parable follows two parables addressed to the chief priests and elders: that of the two sons, which ends with "Truly, I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes will precede you into the Kingdom of God" (Mt 21:32), and that of the homicidal vinedressers, which ends with "The Kingdom of God will be taken from you, and given to a people who will produce its fruits" (Mt 21:43). Matthew thus continues his polemic against "his

people”, recalling once again the numerous dispatches of the prophets, some of whom will be put to death, and the punishment of this stiff-necked people by the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. The guests who refuse the invitation are the Jews, while those who are called last are the Gentiles.

Luke has set this parable in the context of Jesus eating at a Pharisee's house on the Sabbath, where he appeals to his host to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind first. Then, to introduce our parable, he puts into the mouth of a guest these words addressed to Jesus: "Blessed is he who shares the meal in the kingdom of God!" So, on the one hand, the parable takes on an eschatological dimension, that of the meal in the kingdom, and on the other hand, it is colored by the needy who will be the first to partake of this banquet. The allusion to those who were invited and declined the invitation, i.e. "the chosen people", is present in the conclusion, but in Luke they have been replaced first and foremost by the needy, even if "others" will join them so that the hall is full. If there's a polemical dimension in Luke, it's with regard to wealth.

- m. Mt 10: 37-38 || Lk 14: 26-27 the disciple must prefer Jesus to his family and carry his cross

Matthew inserted this logion at the end of Jesus' missionary discourse, after warning his envoys that it is not peace he has come to bring, but the sword, and more specifically he has come to "separate man from father, daughter from mother, daughter-in-law from mother-in-law" (Mt 10:35). So, some family members will side with Jesus, others against. So an envoy who, out of family attachment, would renounce his mission, is not worthy of him.

Luke has inserted this logion into Jesus' long journey to Jerusalem, where he focuses his teaching on the Christian life. He takes the trouble to introduce this logion as follows: "A crowd of people was going with Jesus. He turned and said to them all" (Lk 14:25). The fact that Jesus turns around is intended to emphasize the importance of the teaching that follows. What's more, Jesus addresses himself "to all", not just to his immediate disciples or envoys, but to all those who put their trust in him. Finally, he addresses the people who walk behind him, and so all this introduces the theme of the requirements for following Jesus. These requirements can be summed up in three: preferring Jesus to family and marital ties if there is conflict (v. 26), bearing the cross of these requirements (v. 27), and being ready to give up all one's possessions (v. 33).

- n. Mt 5: 13 || Lk 14: 34-35 uselessness of salt that has lost its taste

Matthew placed this logion in his Sermon on the Mount, immediately after the Beatitudes. The meaning of salt is clear: it is the wisdom of the beatitudes. And by using the expression "you are the salt of the earth" followed by "you are the light of the world", Matthew is addressing his disciples to remind them of their mission: to make known to the world the wisdom of the beatitudes, which will enable the world to bear all its fruit. Note that Matthew omitted the word "manure", either because he was uncomfortable with it, or because he felt it detracted from his point.

Luke placed this logion after the presentation of the disciple's three requirements: to prefer Jesus to family and marital ties if there is conflict (v. 26), to bear the cross of these requirements (v. 27), to be ready to renounce all possessions (v. 33). Salt, then, denotes the wisdom of the disciple who gives priority to Jesus, carries his cross and renounces all his possessions. If the disciple loses these properties, he no longer bears the fruits of discipleship, he loses his identity and is no longer part of Jesus' following.

- o. Mt 18: 12-14 || Lk 15: 4-7 the man who leaves 99 sheep to go after lost one

Matthew placed this parable in his discourse on fraternal life (ch. 18). It is preceded by a warning not to push to sin any of the "little ones" who believe in Jesus (Mt 18:6-9), and is followed by the rules on fraternal correction (Mt 18:15-18). Thus, the context is that of Christian life, and the discourse is addressed to disciples, and therefore to community leaders. The parable is intended to encourage community leaders to be true shepherds, bringing their lost brethren back to God and showing as much concern for the lost sheep as the shepherd does. This is a good introduction to the sequence on fraternal correction that follows. The "little ones" of the community seem to be those whose faith is fragile and who can easily be led astray by contact with people outside the community.

Luke seems to have better respected the polemical context of Q Document. To set the context, he composes an introduction (Lk 15:1-3) in which tax collectors and sinners approach Jesus, arousing the irritation of the Pharisees and scribes, for whom consorting with these people makes one unclean. The effect of the parable is, on the one hand, to explain and justify Jesus' need to associate with "unclean" people in order to bring them back to God, and on the other hand, with a touch of irony, to embarrass the Pharisees and scribes by leading them to identify with those who don't need to change, i.e. those for whom God doesn't need to intervene.

- p. Mt 6: 24 || Lk 16: 13 one cannot serve two masters

Matthew placed this logion in his Sermon on the Mount, where it serves as an introduction to his exhortation to avoid worrying about what to eat or what to wear. The evangelist seems to assume that we seek wealth out of concern for good food and clothing. And so, by eliminating these worries, we will no longer be interested in

money. Moreover, the teaching on worries suggests trusting the Father in heaven, like birds and plants. This means that serving money expresses the absence of faith.

Luke places this logion in a sequence around money. It follows the parable of the shrewd steward who skilfully used money to get out of a bad situation, and a teaching about money as a criterion of one's ability to manage true good, and will be followed by the mention that the Pharisees loved money. Throughout this sequence, the word "deceitful money" recurs like a leitmotif. So, unlike Matthew, Luke doesn't just talk about the incompatibility between money and God, but rather about good management in the service of the kingdom, avoiding the (deceptive) illusions it gives rise to.

- q. Mt 17: 20 || Lk 17: 6 If you had faith like grain of mustard seed, you could move mountains

Matthew inserted this logion at the end of the story of the healing of the epileptic child (Mt 17:14-28). Our logion becomes Jesus' response to the disciples on their failure to heal the child. And this response is introduced thus: "It is because of your little faith", a typically Matthaean adjective.

Luke inserted this logion after the logia on scandals and the forgiveness granted to those who repent. And he introduces it thus: "And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith'." This request to increase faith follows the call to forgive without limit. It's possible, then, that the apostles found Jesus' path of unlimited forgiveness difficult, and so asked for his help to enter into this vision of trusting life and others in this way.

2. Various context analyses

Let's take a look at a few examples of pericopes where the verses that precede them or the verses that follow are important in shedding light on them.

- a. Lk 10: 1-20: choosing and sending the 72 disciples

What precedes our pericope begins with the start of this ascent to Jerusalem, and focuses on the sending out on mission. First of all, the disciples are sent to Samaria to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Unfortunately, because of the enmity between Jews and Samaritans, and the rivalry between the temple on Mount Garizim and the one in Jerusalem, they are not welcomed. Nevertheless, the march to Jerusalem continues with a teaching on the condition of the disciple, first with someone who asks to follow Jesus and is told that a disciple is like a migrant, without a specific home, then with someone whom Jesus calls to follow him, but who puts forward other priorities, such as burying his father, which contradicts the absolute priority of announcing the reign of God. Thus, our pericope ties in with this great context of following Jesus and sending him out on mission, and thus provides an opportunity to detail the missionary work. We must also assume that the 72 disciples meet the discipleship requirements specified by Jesus.

Considering what follows our pericope, we might wonder whether there's any real connection, since we're talking about revelation to infants. But Luke goes to the trouble of pointing out that there is a link through the expression: "At this very hour", i.e. at the very moment when Jesus says: "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven". What's the connection? The 72 represent those disciples who do not belong to the group of the wise and clever, but to the little ones to whom Jesus reveals who the Father really is. So the missionaries' true joy comes from having been chosen to know the mystery of the Father, and their mission will in turn be to make it known.

- b. Lk 6: 39-45: a blind man cannot lead another blind man, a good tree does not produce rotten fruit

Our pericope belongs to this "discourse in the plain" (6:20-49), the place being indicated in 6: 17, while Jesus has just chosen the twelve apostles on a mountain (6: 12-16), and Luke writes: "going down with them, he stood on a level place" (6: 17). This discourse is well delineated, for it begins in 6:20 with: "Then, looking up at his disciples, Jesus said", and ends in 7:1 with: "When Jesus had finished speaking to the people, he entered Capernaum".

This discourse in the plain presents the expected conduct of the perfect disciple. Our pericope is preceded by an exhortation to act towards our neighbor: show compassion and non-judgment, and God will have the same attitude towards us. Our pericope then becomes a series of images illustrating what all this means: just as a blind man cannot guide another blind man, so we must learn to follow Jesus' attitude by cleaning up our personal biases and refraining from judgment. And then our mouths and actions will reflect this heart that has become kind and compassionate. Our pericope is followed by an exhortation from Jesus to put into practice the teaching received, an exhortation that serves as a conclusion to the discourse on the plain.

- c. Mk 10: 2-16: divorce and the place of children

First, in 10:1, we see a change of scene: "Leaving there (Capernaum), Jesus went into the territory of Judea, beyond the Jordan". And the next geographical note comes in 10:17: "As he set out on his journey, someone came running and fell to his knees before him". The effect of all this is to form the whole of 10:2-16 as a small, independent island, our pericope.

When we consider the verses that precede our pericope, we see that they are marked by conflict: conflict between disciples (9:34 “they had quarreled”) to determine who was the greatest, and thus over precedence (9:33-37), conflict with rival groups doing the same exorcisms (9:38-41), conflict with the weakest in the community (42-48), and the whole thing ends with a conclusion around the role of salt, symbolizing the role of the Christian, and a call to keep this property and live in peace with one another (49-50). Our pericope continues the theme of conflict with the mention of the Pharisees setting a trap by broaching the issue of divorce, as well as with the mention of the disciples pushing away the children who want to approach Jesus.

The story (10:17-31) that follows our pericope is about a man who wants to inherit eternal life, and whom Jesus calls to follow him. His refusal because of his wealth gives Jesus the opportunity to teach about wealth as an obstacle to the Christian life, and about what those who are willing to give it up will receive. Then comes the conclusion: “Many who are first will be last, and the last will be first”. We are faced with a conflict between two worlds and two scales of value. This opposition also colors our pericope: opposition between the Jewish world’s vision of marriage and that of Jesus, opposition between the community authorities’ vision of the place of little children and that of Jesus.

d. Mt 2: 1-12: the arrival of the Magi from the East

To grasp the immediate context, it is sometimes necessary to grasp the structure of the chapters and their interrelation. This is the case with Mt 2:1-12.

Let’s try to map out Matthew’s infancy narrative. One possible key is the question Matthew is trying to answer, which was aimed at both the members of his community and the attacks of his fellow Jews.

Section	Questions answered by Matthieu
a. Genealogy of Jesus 1: 1-17 :	<u>who is he?</u> Son of David, so son of God, son of Abraham
b. Conception of Jesus 1: 18-25 :	<u>how is he the son of David?</u> Through his adoption by Joseph <u>how he is the son of God?</u> by the Holy Spirit
c. The coming of the magi to Bethlehem 2: 1-12 :	<u>from where?</u> From Bethlehem, as the son of David <u>how he is Abraham’s son?</u> By the Magi from the East
d. Flight of the family to Egypt and return to Nazareth 2: 13-23:	<u>whence is he?</u> He is from Egypt, where he relives the experience of Moses and the exodus of his people, and he is from Galilee, the land of the Gentiles.

Thus, the story of the Magi presents Jesus as a Jewish messiah, since he was born in Bethlehem, David’s homeland, and is of David’s lineage through his adoption by Joseph, and thus meets the criteria of a Davidic messiah. But our story focuses on his acceptance by the Gentiles, making him the true son of Abraham, who had come from the East to settle in Canaan, the Gentile land, in whom “all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen 12:3), and to whom God had promised numerous descendants like the stars of heaven (Gen 15:5).

e. Mt 14: 22-33: walking on water

Our story is preceded by a scene in which Herod the tetrarch learns of Jesus’ reputation for healing and sees John the Baptist as having risen from the dead, which would explain his special powers. Matthew takes this opportunity to recount the death of John the Baptist. He then goes on to tell us that, on hearing of John the Baptist’s death, Jesus withdrew by boat to a deserted spot. But this retreat is short-lived, as crowds from all over follow him on foot, joining him as he disembarks. And he writes: “When Jesus disembarked, he saw a great crowd; he felt pity for them and healed their sick” (14: 14). There is no teaching to the crowds, only compassion for their infirmities. Then comes evening, and the disciples suggest sending the crowd away to feed, but Jesus retorts that they should feed the crowd themselves. Although it is Jesus who blesses the bread, it is the disciples who act as intermediaries between Jesus and the crowd, and thus feed the crowd. Matthew’s intention is clear: Jesus’ teaching is no longer addressed to the crowd, but to his disciples, and what Jesus has done, the disciples will have to do in their turn: heal and feed people, in short, exercise compassion.

Now let’s look at what follows our account of the walk on the waters. The boat arrives at Gennesareth. Now, what does Matthew tell us? The people of that place recognized him, and sent for all the people of the region, and they brought to him all the sick” (14:34). What followed was a long day of healings of all kinds. So, what precedes our pericope is a teaching to the disciples about compassion, and what follows is a day of compassion, again a teaching to the disciples. We can recognize in what precedes and follows our story a form of inclusion.

When we have a form of inclusion, the key to interpreting the whole is found in what is at the center of the inclusion, and here it’s our story of walking on the waters. Let’s not forget that the waters, the waves and the

sea represent the forces of evil, as does disease. So, the key to interpreting all these stories in which Jesus exercises compassion and teaches compassion to his disciples is the faith that he is alive in the night of his absence, and to be able to recognize that he is son of God, master over the forces of evil.

There's something ironic about Herod's perception of Jesus' healing powers, associating him with a resurrection of the dead, that of John the Baptist. He is partly right in speaking of a resurrection of the dead, but it will be that of Jesus himself, and above all in speaking of death, for the path of compassion is a path that passes through death.

f. Mt 5: 13-16: you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world

The immediate context of our pericope is Jesus' inaugural discourse on the mountain, which begins in 5:1-2: "When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain. He sat down, and his disciples came to him." This discourse ends in 7:28-29: "And when Jesus had finished these instructions, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught them as a man of authority, and not as their scribes."

Let's take a look at the structure of this discourse. The reference to our passage is in bold type.

Exordium: the Beatitudes or the fundamental attitude of the Christian (5: 3-12)

The Christian identity (5: 13-20)

- **To guide the world by one's actions and thus bear witness to God (5: 13-16)**
- This action goes further than the letter of the law (5: 17-20)

Six illustrations of this identity, which aims to replicate God's own action (5: 21-48)

- i. It is not enough not to kill; you must refuse to speak ill and reconcile if necessary (5: 21-26)
- ii. It is not enough not to commit adultery; you must purify your eyes and your desires (5: 27-30)
- iii. Repudiating one's spouse has no place, except in cases of promiscuity (5: 31-32)
- iv. Keeping one's oaths is not enough; one must avoid swearing and tell the truth (5: 33-37)
- v. The law of retaliation has no place, but we must respond to evil with good (5: 38-42)
- vi. Hatred of the enemy has no place, but we must love him and pray for him (5: 43-48)

General statement on good deeds: avoid self-promotion (6: 1)

Three illustrations of good deeds (6: 2-18)

- i. Almsgiving: avoid being loud, and do it discreetly
- ii. Praying: avoid being conspicuous, and do it privately and with few words, such as the Our Father
- iii. Fasting: avoid looking glum, and make sure no one knows you're fasting

Four exhortations (6: 19 - 7: 27)

- i. Avoiding greed (6: 19-34)
 - Illustration: earthly goods last only a short time and come into conflict with God; in any case, God takes care of your good.
- ii. Avoid perverting your relationships with others (7: 1-12)
 - Illustration: don't judge them, know how to give them what they need, do to them what you'd like them to do to you.
- iii. Avoid the easy way (7: 13-20)
 - Illustration: this is what false prophets propose, and we must judge them by their fruits.
- iv. True discipleship means taking action and taking action accordingly (7: 21-27)
 - Illustration: putting Jesus' teachings into practice is like building solidly on rock

As can be seen, the entire inaugural address defines Christian action. It begins with the fundamental attitude made explicit by the Beatitudes, then continues with the affirmation of the Christian identity called to be salt of the earth and light of the world through good deeds, deeds that must be visible so that we know who God is. The rest of the discourse clarifies these good deeds: they must go beyond the letter of the law, and fundamentally they replicate God's own action. The conclusion picks up on what has already been said: the Christian is defined by his actions.

In this discourse, Matthew has brought together many elements of the tradition found elsewhere in the other evangelists. But he has given them a direction of his own, centered on action. This should come as no surprise. Matthew is a Jew, and like every Jew, it's orthopraxy that's important, i.e. acting in accordance with God's will. And he must help his community make the transition from the Jewish to the Christian faith, a community

where some may imagine that, by abandoning the Torah, they find themselves without law, without precept, without commandment.

In this context, our pericope (5:13-16) plays a pivotal role, moving from the fundamental Christian attitude spelled out in the Beatitudes to the new set of Christian “precepts”. This pericope justifies their importance:

- It's part of Christian identity and role in the world
- It's the way to make God known

3. Establishing the structure of the analysis unit

1. [The story of the dispute provoked by Jesus](#)
 2. [The story of dispute by those who want to trap Jesus](#)
 3. [The story of a question or request addressed to Jesus](#)
 4. [The miracle story](#)
 5. [The hybrid story: Jesus' word/teaching and miraculous action](#)
 6. [The warning narrative](#)
 7. [The story of Jesus' trials and temptations](#)
 8. [The Beatitudes / Curses](#)
 9. [Birth announcement story](#)
 10. [The casuistic narrative](#)
 11. [The story with a chiasm or Semitic inclusion structure](#)
 12. [The parable story](#)
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Establishing the structure of a story contributes greatly to its understanding. It's all about understanding how the story develops, the sequence of events and ideas. It's about understanding what role the evangelist gives to each sentence or part of a sentence. The criteria we have used to delimit the narrative contribute in part to this structure, since the beginning often serves as an introduction or setting, and the end as a conclusion. There's something unique about every story, but generally speaking, the narrative of an event often contains a chain of actions and reactions. Take, for example, the story of the Magi in Mt 2:1-12.

- i. Action of the magi: they go to Jerusalem and ask the Jews about the birth of the King of the Jews.
- ii. Reaction of Herod: troubled, he gathers information from the chief priests and scribes and asks the magi to inform him when they have found the child king.
- iii. Reaction of the magi: they act on the information they have received and plan to reply to Herod.
- iv. Action from heaven: the star shows them the place
- v. Reaction of the magi: filled with great joy, they prostrate themselves before the child.

But when a story belongs to a specific literary genre, we can expect it to obey a pre-established structure, which makes it easier to establish the story's internal logic.

Let's consider a number of these types of story or literary genre. Each type has its usual structure. But sometimes, one or other element of this structure is absent. We've enclosed the missing elements in square brackets [].

1. The story of the dispute provoked by Jesus

A dispute narrative presents a lively discussion or dispute between Jesus and other characters.

- i. Introduction or setting the scene: presentation of place, time or characters
- ii. Surprising word or action by Jesus
- iii. Audience reaction
- iv. [Jesus' response]
- v. [Conclusion]

Examples :

Mk 6: 1-6: Jesus teaches in the synagogue of Nazareth

- i. Introduction or setting: place (Nazareth), characters (disciples)
- ii. Surprising word or action by Jesus: Jesus teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath
- iii. Audience reaction: incomprehension at the wisdom and healings of an ordinary, middle-class man.
- iv. Jesus' response: a prophet is despised in his milieu
- v. Conclusion: because of lack of faith, no healing is possible

Mt 22: 41-46 : Christ and David

- i. Introduction or setting: place (temple), characters (Jesus and the Pharisees)
- ii. Surprising word or action by Jesus: How is Christ the son of David?
- iii. Audience reaction: no one can answer, and they stop questioning him.

2. The story of dispute by those who want to trap Jesus

- i. Introduction or setting the scene: presentation of the place, time or characters
- ii. Presentation of the disputed case
- iii. Jesus' position
- iv. [Reaction of the audience or disciples]
- v. [Conclusion]

Table of a number of disputes, indicating which elements of this structure are present.

Reference	Description	i	ii	iii	iv	v
Mk 10: 2-9	The question about divorce	*	*	*	*	*
Mk 10: 13-16	Jesus and children	*	*	*		*
Mk 12: 13-17	Paying tax to Caesar	*	*	*	*	
Mt 16: 1-4	Request for a sign from heaven	*	*	*		
Mt 22: 23-33	Question about the resurrection of the dead	*	*	*	*	
Mt 22: 34-40	Question about the greatest commandment	*	*	*	*	*

Examples :

Mk 10: 1-9: The question about divorce

- i. Introduction or setting: the Pharisees and a crowd (characters), east bank of the Jordan in Judea (place)
- ii. Presentation of the issue and brief dialogue:
 - Pharisees: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"
 - Jesus: "What did Moses command you?"
 - Pharisees: "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her."
- iii. Jesus' position
 - Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you
 - Reference to Gn 1: 27: "God made them male and female"
 - Reference to Gn 2: 24: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife"
 - "What God has joined together, let no one separate"
- iv. Reaction of the audience or disciples: at home, the disciples question Jesus
- v. Conclusion
 - Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her
 - and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery

Mk 12: 13-17: paying tax to Caesar

- i. Setting: some Pharisees and supporters of Herod (characters)
- ii. Presentation of the issue and brief dialogue:
 - Jesus: "Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it"
 - Jesus: "Whose head is this and whose title?"
 - Pharisees and Herodians: "Caesar's"
- iii. Jesus' position: "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's"
- iv. Reaction of the audience: people are filled with wonder

3. The story of a question or request addressed to Jesus

- i. Introduction or setting the scene: presentation of the place, time or characters
- ii. Presentation of the question or request
- iii. Jesus' response and dialogue with the petitioner
- iv. [Final response or conclusion]

Examples :

Mk 10: 17-22: riches and the Reign of God

- i. **Introduction:** somewhere on the road (place), random man (character)
- ii. Presentation of **request:** what to do to obtain eternal life
- iii. Jesus' **response** and dialogue with the petitioner: follow the Ten Commandments, then call on him to sell his possessions and give to the poor
- iv. Final answer or **conclusion:** the man went away sad.

Lk 12: 13-15: request for division of inheritance

- i. **Introduction:** someone from the crowd (character)
- ii. Presentation of **request:** "Tell my brother to share our inheritance with me".
- iii. Jesus' **response:** That's not his job.
- iv. **Conclusion:** A person's life does not depend on his possessions.

4. The miracle story

- i. Presentation of the problem
- ii. [Request for Jesus' intervention]
- iii. Jesus intervenes
- iv. Observation of the healing or problem solved
- v. [Reaction of audience or person healed]

Chart of Jesus' miracles, showing which elements of this structure are present.

Reference	Description	i	ii	iii	iv	v
Mk 1: 23-28	The Man with an Unclean Spirit	*		*	*	*
Mk 1: 29-31	Pierre's mother-in-law	*	*	*	*	
Mk 1: 40-45	The leper	*	*	*	*	*
Mk 2: 1-12	The paralytic	*		*	*	*
Mk 3: 1-6	The man with a withered hand	*		*	*	*
Mk 4: 35-41	The stilled storm	*	*	*	*	*
Mk 5: 1-20	Man possessed by demons	*		*	*	*
Mk 5: 21-24.35-43	Jairus' daughter	*	*	*	*	*
Mk 5: 25-34	The woman suffering from haemorrhage	*			*	
Mk 6: 32-44	Jesus feeds five thousand people	*	*	*	*	
Mk 6: 45-52	Jesus walks on water	*		*	*	*
Mk 7: 24-30	The Syro-Phoenician's daughter	*	*	*	*	
Mk 7: 31-36	The deaf and dumb	*	*	*	*	*
Mk 8: 1-10	Jesus feeds four thousand people	*		*	*	
Mk 8: 22-26	The blind man of Bethsaida	*	*	*	*	*
Mk 9: 14-29	The possessed child and his father	*	*	*	*	
Mk 10: 46-52	The blind Bartimaeus	*	*	*	*	*
Mt 8: 5-13	The centurion's servant	*	*	*	*	
Mt 9: 32-34	The man possessed by a mute demon	*		*	*	*
Mt 12: 22-23	The man possessed by a deaf and mute demon	*		*	*	
Lc 5: 1-11	Miraculous fishing	*		*	*	*
Lc 7: 11-17	The young man from Nain	*		*	*	*
Lc 13: 10-17	The bent woman	*		*	*	*
Lc 14: 1-6	A man with edema	*		*	*	
Lc 17: 11-19	The ten lepers	*	*	*	*	*
Jn 2: 1-11	Turning water into wine	*	*	*	*	*
Jn 5: 1-9	The pool paralytic	*		*	*	*
Jn 9	The born blind	*		*	*	*
Jn 11	The raising of Lazarus	*		*	*	*

Examples :

Mk 1: 40-45: the leper

- i. Presentation of the problem: a leper
- ii. Request for intervention addressed to Jesus: the leper kneels before him and begs him, saying, "If you want, you can cleanse me!"
- iii. Jesus' intervention: overwhelmed, Jesus reached out his hand, touched him and said, "I do, be cleansed!"
- iv. Observation of healing or problem solved: Immediately, the leprosy left the man and he was cleansed.
- v. Reaction of the audience or the person healed: The man left, but began to tell everyone what had happened to him.

Jn 2: 1-11: turning water into wine

- i. Presentation of the problem: the wine ran out.
- ii. Request for Jesus to intervene: Jesus' mother tells him, "They've run out of wine."
- iii. Jesus intervenes: Jesus tells the servants, "Fill these jars with water... Now draw some of this water and take it to the master of the feast."
- iv. Observation of healing or problem solved: the master of the feast tasted the water turned into wine. He didn't know where the wine had come from, but the servants who had drawn the water did.
- v. Reaction of the audience or the healed person: the master of the feast then called the groom and said to him: "Everyone starts by offering the best wine, then, when the guests are drunk, the worst is served. But you've kept the best wine until now!"

5. The hybrid story: Jesus' word/teaching and miraculous action

- i. Introduction or setting: presentation of the place, time or characters
- ii. Part 1: Jesus' speech or teaching
 - a. Mention of Jesus' teaching
 - b. [Audience reaction]
- iii. Part 2: Jesus' miraculous action
 - a. Presentation of the situation
 - b. Jesus' miraculous action
 - c. Result of Jesus' action
- iv. [General conclusion: audience reaction]

Note that in such a hybrid story, Part 2 is linked to Part 1 by illustrating it.

Example :

Mk 1: 21-28: Jesus teaches in Capernaum and heals a man

- i. Introduction: Capernaum synagogue (location), Jesus and his disciples (characters)
- ii. Part 1: Jesus' teaching
 - a. Mention of Jesus' teaching
 - b. Audience reaction: they are impressed
- iii. Part 2: Jesus' miraculous action
 - a. Presentation of the situation: man with an unclean spirit
 - b. Jesus' miraculous action: "Be quiet and come out of him!"
 - c. Result of Jesus' action: the impure spirit comes out with a loud cry
- iv. General conclusion: the fame of Jesus spreads everywhere

See also Lk 5: 1-11 and Lk 9: 11-17

6. The warning narrative

- i. Introduction or setting the scene: presentation of place, time or characters
- ii. Description of faulty attitude
- iii. Consequence of this attitude

Example

Mk 12: 38-40

- i. Introduction: Jesus teaches in the temple
- ii. Description of the faulty attitude: the scribes like to be looked at, greeted, have the places of honor, give the impression of praying a lot, while stealing the widows' property.
- iii. Consequence of this attitude: they will be judged more severely

7. The story of Jesus' trials and temptations

- i. Introduction or setting: presentation of place, time or characters
- ii. Test 1
 - a. Proposal
 - b. Jesus' response
- iii. Test 2
 - a. Proposal
 - b. Jesus' response
- iv. Test 3
 - a. Proposal
 - b. Jesus' response
- v. Conclusion

Example :

Lk 4: 1-13

- i. Introduction: in the desert (place), for 40 days (time), Jesus and the devil (characters)
- ii. Test 1: avoid hunger
 - a. Proposal: turning stone into bread
 - b. Jesus response: human beings do not live by bread alone
- iii. Test 2: obtain the glory and power of the kingdoms
 - a. Proposal: bowing down to the devil
 - b. Jesus response: God alone can be the object of worship
- iv. Test 3: to avoid death
 - a. Proposal: throw oneself down from the temple roof
 - b. Jesus response: you can't force God to act
- v. Conclusion: the devil goes away to come back later

See also Mt 4: 1-11

8. The Beatitudes / Curses

- i. Adjective or verb of glorification or denunciation
- ii. Description of attitude
- iii. [Consequences of this attitude]

Examples :

Lk 6: 21

- i. Adjective of glorification: Blessed
- ii. Description of attitude: Blessed are you who are hungry now
- iii. Consequences: for you will be filled

Mt 23: 13

- i. Adjective of denunciation: woe
- ii. Description of attitude: scribes and Pharisees lock people out of the kingdom of heaven
- iii. Consequences of this attitude: they won't enter, and prevent those who want to from entering

For the expression "blessed", see Lk 1: 45; 6: 20-23; 10: 23; 11: 27-28; 12: 37-38; 14: 14-15; 23: 29; Mt 5: 3-11; 11: 6; 13: 16; 16: 17; 24: 46; Jn 13: 17; 20: 29

For the expression "woe", see Mk 13: 17; 14: 21; Lk 6: 24-26; 10: 13; 11: 42-44,46,47,52; 17: 1; 21: 23-24; Mt 11: 21; 18: 7; 23: 13,15-16,23,25,27,29; 24: 19,24

9. Birth announcement story

This is the structure used in the Old Testament, and is repeated in Lk 1:26-38 and Mt 1:20-21. On the subject, see [the standard structure of birth announcements](#) proposed by R.E. Brown.

- i. The appearance of an angel of the Lord (or appearance of the Lord)
- ii. Fear or prostration of the visionary confronted by this supernatural presence
- iii. The divine message
 - a. The visionary is addressed by name
 - b. A qualifying phrase describing the visionary
 - c. The visionary is urged not to be afraid

- d. A woman is with child or is about to be with child
- e. She will give birth to the (male) child
- f. The name by which the child is to be called
- g. An etymology interpreting the name
- h. The future accomplishments of the child
- iv. An objection by the visionary as to how this can be or a request for a sign
- v. The giving of a sign to reassure the visionary

See biblical [examples for the five steps](#) by R.E. Brown

10. The casuistic narrative

These are stories that propose a situation covered by religious legislation and suggest the elements of the law that should be applied.

- A. If (protasis) such a situation
- B. Then (apodosis) then the consequence

Example :

Mk 10: 11-12;

- A. If (protasis) someone sends his wife away and marries another
- B. Then (apodosis) he commits adultery with the first
- C. If (protasis) a woman sends her husband away and marries another man
- D. Then (apodosis) she commits adultery

See also Mt 5: 32; 18: 15-17,21; 19: 9

11. The story with a chiasm or Semitic inclusion structure

This structure is regularly used in the Semitic world, where the various statements are repeated in parallel and symmetrical fashion, like choirs answering each other, so that the end repeats the beginning, sometimes with a single center that is the keystone for interpretation. At its simplest, this structure takes the form A, B, B', A'. Another, slightly more complex form is A, B, C, B', A', where the center has no direct parallel but contains the key to interpreting the whole.

See example from Mk 8: 34 :

- A If any wish to follow me,
- B let them deny themselves
- B' and take up their cross
- A' and follow me.

Here's the example of Lk 5:17 - 6:11, which contains a unique center, the key to interpretation.

- A introduction 5: 17: Jesus teaches, the Pharisees and scribes are present
- B healing 5: 18-26: a paralyzed man
- C dispute 5: 27-35: Jesus eats with Levi and the tax collectors
- D two parables 5: 36-39: new and old clothes, new wine and old wineskins
- C' dispute 6: 1-5: the disciples gather ears of corn on the Sabbath
- B' healing 6: 6-10: a man with a paralyzed right hand is healed on the Sabbath
- A' conclusion 6: 11: furious, the scribes and Pharisees discuss how to kill Jesus

See also Jn 3: 16-18

- A He gave the only son
- B that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but may have eternal life
- C For God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world
- C' but that the world might be saved through him
- B' Whoever believes in him is not condemned
- But whoever does not believe has already been condemned
- A' for refusing to believe in the name of God's only son

Another example comes from Jn 18: 28 - 19: 16a.

Biblical scholars agree that there are seven episodes in this passage which form a chiasm, i.e. where the episodes respond to each other in parallel, but in reverse mode (the last is parallel to the first, the penultimate to the second, etc.).

1. <u>Outside</u> (18: 28-32) Jews demand death	↓ = ↑	7. <u>Inside</u> (19: 12-16a) Jews obtain death
2. <u>Inside</u> (18: 33-38a) Pilate and Jesus on kingship	↓ = ↑	6. <u>Inside</u> (19: 9-11) Pilate and Jesus on power
3. <u>Outside</u> (18: 38b-40) Pilate finds no guilt; choice of Barabbas	↓ = ↑	5. <u>Outside</u> (19: 4-8) Pilate finds no guilt; "Behold the man"
	→	
4. <u>Inside</u> (19: 1-3) Soldiers scourge Jesus		

Without a doubt, this artistic arrangement is deliberate. Pilate, as the main actor, appears in all the episodes, except for the one in the middle devoted to the violence against Jesus; in the latter case, John changed the tradition that placed this violence after the condemnation of Jesus, to make it the pivot between phase 1 and phase 2.

The atmosphere between the scenes inside and outside is very different. Inside, Jesus appears as a serene ruler proclaiming his convictions, while Pilate proves unable to recognize the truth. Outside, the Jews try to intimidate Pilate and shout that Jesus must die, revealing their true motivation: not his claim to be king of the Jews, but his claim to be the Son of God.

12. The parable story

This literary genre presents a particular problem. The distinction between parable, comparison, metaphor and image is very blurred. The problem stems from the fact that the Greek word *parabolē* is a translation of the Hebrew *māšāl*, which can mean: comparison, metaphor, object of mockery, song of mockery, motto, axiom, maxim, aphorism, riddle.

Nevertheless, a number of parabolic stories have the following structure:

- i. Introduction
- ii. Parabolic or allegorical narrative
- iii. [Misunderstanding of its meaning]
- iv. [Explanation of the story's meaning, often by allegorizing the story]
- v. [Audience reaction or dialogue with Jesus]
- vi. [Conclusion]

Here's a table of the main parables, showing which elements of this structure are present.

Reference	Description	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi
Mk 4: 3-9,13-20 et	The Sower	*	*	*	*		*
Mk 4: 26-29 et	Seed Growing by Itself	*	*				
Mk 4: 30-32 et	Mustard Seed	*	*				
Mk 12: 1-11 et	Evil Tenants of the Vineyard	*	*			*	
Mt 13: 24-30,36,43	Wheat and Weeds	*	*	*	*		*
Mt 13: 34-36	Treasure Hidden in the Field and the Pearl	*	*		*		*
Mt 13: 37-40	Fish Net	*	*		*		*
Mt 18: 12-14 Lk 15: 4-7	Lost Sheep	*	*				
Mt 18: 23-35	Le débiteur impitoyable	*	*				*
Mt 20: 1-16	Workers in the Vineyard	*	*				*
Mt 21: 28-32	Two Sons	*	*			*	*
Mt 22: 1-10 Lk 14: 16-24	The Wedding Feast	*	*				
Mt 22: 11-14	Guest without a Wedding Garment		*				*
Mt 25: 1-13	Ten Virgins	*	*				*
Mt 25: 14-30 Lk 19: 12-27	Talents (Pounds)	*	*				
Lk 10: 29-37	Good Samaritan	*	*			*	*
Lk 11: 5-8	Rich Fool	*	*				*
Lk 13: 6-9	Barren Fig Tree	*	*				
Lk 15: 8-10	Lost Coin	*	*				*
Lk 15: 11-32	Prodigal Son	*	*				
Lk 16: 1-8	Dishonest Steward	*	*				*
Lk 16: 19-31	Rich Man and Lazarus	*	*				

Lk 18: 1-8	Widow and Unjust Judge	*	*				*
Lk 18: 9-14	Pharisee and Tax Collector	*	*				*
Lk 10: 1-21	The parable of the good shepherd	*	*	*	*	*	

Examples :

Mk 4: 3-9,13-20 : the Sower

- i. **Introduction:** sitting in a boat (place), Jesus, a crowd (characters)
- ii. Parabolic or allegorical **story:** "Listen! The sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some of the seed fell by the wayside..."
- iii. **Misunderstanding of its meaning:** When Jesus was away from the crowd, those around him with the twelve disciples questioned him about the parables.
- iv. **Explanation of the story's meaning,** often allegorizing it: The sower = the word of God, the seed by the wayside = Satan who takes away what is sown, etc.

Mt 13: 24-30,36,43: Wheat and Weeds

- i. **Introduction:** Jesus tells another parable... the kingdom is like...
- ii. A parabolic or allegorical **story:** Someone had sown good seed in his field. One night, while everyone was asleep...
- iii. **Misunderstanding of its meaning:** At home, his disciples say, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."
- iv. **Explanation of the story's meaning,** often by allegorizing the story: sower = Son of man, field = world, etc.
- v. [Audience reaction or dialogue with Jesus]: Nil
- vi. **Conclusion:** people who are faithful to God will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom. He who has ears, let him hear!

Jn 10: 1-21: The parable of the good shepherd

- i. **Introduction:** Pharisees (characters), after the healing of the born-blind man (moment), Jesus declares to them in truth
- ii. Parabolic or allegorical **story:** "He who enters the sheep pen without going through the gate..."
- iii. **Misunderstanding of its meaning:** his listeners did not understand what he was telling them.
- iv. **Explanation of the story's meaning,** often by allegorizing the story: gate = Jesus, thieves = those who came before him, etc.
- v. **Audience reaction** or dialogue with Jesus: The Jews were divided again because of these words. Many of them said, "He's demon-possessed! He's crazy! Why are you listening to him?" Others replied, "A demon-possessed person wouldn't talk like that. Is a demon capable of opening the eyes of the blind?"

4. Drawing parallels

- A. Goal
 1. [Mark](#)
 2. [Matthew and Luke](#)
 3. [John](#)
- B. A parallel analysis technique
 1. [Mark's passages in the other Gospels are underlined](#)
 2. [The parallels between Matthew and Luke are marked by the color blue.](#)
 3. [Parallels between John and the other Gospels are marked in red.](#)
- C. Applying this technique to the English translation text
 1. [Identical words in Greek](#)
 2. [Partially identical words in Greek](#)
- D. General comments on parallel analysis
 1. [Identifying literary changes](#)
 2. [Identifying theological changes](#)
 3. [Identifying the evangelist's sources](#)
 4. [Identifying the target audience of the evangelist](#)
 5. [Stories without parallel](#)
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 7. [John's parallels with the other Gospels](#)
 8. [The use of the Old Testament in parallels](#)

A. Goal

Parallels between gospel accounts are sought when there are passages referring to similar scenes or similar words by Jesus. The aim is to identify the close touches of each evangelist in relation to the similar story, and thereby identify elements of his theology or literary style that are peculiar to him.

The analysis of parallels is marked by the two-source theory. According to this theory, Mark was the first to publish a gospel around the years 65 to 70, and Matthew, who would have published his around the years 80-85, and Luke, around the years 85-90, would both have used Mark's gospel as their primary source and basic canvas, while enriching it with a source, called Q (from the German Quelle = source), a source written around the years 50 or 60 and containing mainly sayings of Jesus; Matthew and Luke also had a number of sources of their own. Finally, the Gospel of John, written between 90 and 100, completely ignores the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke and uses a source of its own.

We take this theory into account in drawing parallels, which leads us to three different situations.

1. Mark

Passages from Mark are also found in a similar way in one or other of the evangelists.

Since Matthew and Luke follow Mark's framework (i.e., Jesus' ministry only in Galilee and his ascent to Jerusalem at the end of his ministry to die there) and use its content as a source, the aim in drawing parallels is to show how Matthew and Luke edited what they received from Mark. We then note the accents of their theology and literary style.

2. Matthew and Luke

Matthew and Luke present similar passages, mostly absent from Mark.

From the perspective of the two-source theory, this means that Matthew and Luke take up a source known only to them, called Q. Let's remember that this source is not a complete Gospel, but a binder of Jesus' sayings from which Matthew and Luke have drawn and placed at various points in their Gospel according to their theological needs. The study of parallels here involves certain difficulties, as there is no original copy of this source. It is accepted that Matthew and Luke, when they take up this source, may have modified it, but a detailed study shows that Luke seems more often than not to respect its formulation. The analysis of parallels attempts, on the one hand, to identify the earliest, and therefore most original, elements through an analysis of detail, and on the other hand, to show what role each evangelist gives to this source, above all through the place where he inserts it in his Gospel. Note that when there is a parallel between the Q Document and Mark, this indicates that we are dealing with two variants of a very ancient tradition that could go back to the historical Jesus.

3. John

John sometimes presents passages similar to those found in Mark, Matthew and Luke.

It is generally accepted among biblical scholars that John did not know any of the other evangelists, which explains why he presents us with a framework very different from the other Gospels (i.e. Jesus makes several return trips between Galilee and Judea). Nevertheless, there are some similar passages in the Synoptics (Mark, Matthew and Luke), such as the intervention of John the Baptist, the walking on the waters, the sellers driven out of the temple, the multiplication of the loaves and the miraculous catch of fish. This situation can be explained by the fact that John's source is a variant of an ancient tradition that Mark also knew, but which had a different course. Certain parallels can also be drawn between John and Luke, such as the miraculous fishing, which would imply that John and Luke had access to a similar tradition. The aim of drawing parallels is then to show both the elements that are different, a possible reflection of each evangelist's theology, and the elements common to this ancient tradition that could date back to the period of the historical Jesus.

B. A parallel analysis technique

When analyzing parallels, we try to place similar verses side by side. As far as possible, we try to respect the sequence intended by the evangelist. But for the sake of comparison, we may sometimes double a verse or part of a verse to establish a comparison within the sequence of the reference gospel. In this case, the displaced verse is enclosed in square brackets. For example, in the scene of the walk on the waters, John places Jesus' departure for the mountain in the preceding scene, whereas in Mark and Matthew this departure occurs after the mention that Jesus has dismissed the crowd. If Mark is our Gospel of reference, then we copy John's verse and place it opposite Mark's verse, but enclose it in square brackets. In the following example, Jn 6:15b, out of sequence, is enclosed in square brackets.

- Mk 6: 46 "he went to the mountain to pray" and Mt 14: 23 "he went up the mountain by himself to pray" and [Jn 6: 15b "he withdrew again to the mountain".]

I propose three types of notation for establishing parallels using the three previous situations:

- a. Underlining of words: this is used to indicate words or parts of words from Mark that are also present in the other evangelists; in this case, Mark's text is the reference text and we look to see which other evangelist presents the same words.
- b. Blue coloring of words: this is used to indicate words or forms of words common only to Matthew and Luke.
- c. Red coloring: used to indicate words or forms of words in John that are also found in either Matthew or Luke.

We present this technique in two stages, first in the presentation of the Greek text, then in the presentation of the English translation.

1. Mark's passages in the other Gospels are underlined

Let's start with Mark's gospel, where similar words in the other gospels are underlined.

i. Identical words

One technique is to underline words or sets of words in Mark's gospel that are found identically in another evangelist's. For example, the expression embēnai eis to ploion (to get into the boat) in Mk 6:45 is also found identically in Mt 14:22, so the expression will be underlined in both Mark and Matthew. Of course, if the expression appears in several Gospels, all occurrences of the expression will be underlined. It may happen that an expression in Mark appears identically in one evangelist, but not in a third, where it undergoes a variation. In this case, the expression is underlined in its entirety in Mark and in the other evangelist where it is identical, and partially in the evangelist where the expression is partially identical.

- Mk 11: 17: ho oikos mou oikos proseuchēs (the house of me a house of prayer) and Mt 21: 13: ho oikos mou oikos proseuchēs and Lk 19: 46: ho oikos mou oikos proseuchēs
- Mk 9: 2: Kai meta hēmeras hex paralambanei ho Iēsous ton Petron kai ton Iakōbon kai ton Iōannēn kai anapherei autous eis oros hypsēlon kat' idian monous (and after six days the Jesus takes with him the Peter and the James and the John and leads them up to a high mountain apart alone) and Mt 17: 1: Kai meth' hēmeras hex paralambanei ho Iēsous ton Petron kai Iakōbon kai Iōannēn ton adelphon autou kai anapherei autous eis oros hypsēlon kat' idian (and after six days the Jesus takes with him the Peter and James and John the brother of him and leads them up to a high mountain apart) and Lk 9: 28: Egeneto de meta tous logous toutous hōsei hēmerai oktō [kai] paralahōn Petron kai Iōannēn kai Iakōbon anebē eis to oros proseuxasthai (then, it came to pass after this words about eight days [and] he took with him Peter and John and James, went up to the mountain to pray)

ii. In the Greek text, when the words are partially identical: only identical characters are underlined.

a. Mark's Greek terms are only partially similar to those of another evangelist.

In this case, only identical characters are underlined. Sometimes, it's a variation on a word that has the same meaning. This is the case, for example, with the adverb euthys (immediately), which Mark loves (41 occurrences), but Matthew prefers its synonym eutheōs. In this case, I suggest underlining only the identical letters: this makes it clear that the words are similar, but not identical.

- Mk 6: 45: euthys et Mt 14: 22: eutheōs

b. Greek verbs are often similar, but not identical

A first situation is that of verbs that are identical in the evangelists, but not in the same tense. For example, the verb apolyō (to untie) is in the present indicative in Mk 6:45 (apolyei) and in the aorist subjunctive in Mt 14:22 (apolyē). By underlining only the identical characters, we obtain the following:

- Mk 6: 45: apolyei (he unties) et Mt 14: 22: apolyē (he might untie)

c. A number of irregular verbs in Greek take such a different form that it is impossible to find a sequence of identical letters.

For example, legei (he says: present indicative) becomes eipen (he said: aorist), or erchetai (he came: present indicative) becomes ēlthen (he came: aorist). In this case, I suggest underlining a few characters at the beginning to indicate that it's the same verb, but in different tenses.

- Mk 6: 48: erchetai (he comes) and Mt 14: 25: ēlthen (he came)

d. Greek verbs have many compound forms.

For example, the verbs *embainō*, *anabainō*, *katabainō* and *parabainō* are similar verbs around the root *bainō* to which prepositions have been added as prefixes: *en-*, *ana-*, *kata-*, *para-*. Underlining similar letters indicates that we're looking at a synonym, the result of an evangelist's literary preference.

- Mk 6: 41: *kateklasen* (he broke) and Mt 14: 19: *klāsas* (he broke)
- Mk 6: 49: *anekraxan* (he cried out) and Mt 14: 26: *ekraxan* (they cried)

e. The Greek terms are the same, but not in the same gender or case.

Sometimes an evangelist uses the same word as Mark, but the case or number is different. In such cases, only the identical letters are underlined. This indicates that the word is identical, but not the case or number.

- Mk 6: 48: *epi tēs thalassēs* (*epi* + genitive : *epi* then has a static meaning and Mark's emphasis is on the fact that Jesus is on the water, dominating it) and Mt 14: 25: *epi tēn thalassan* (*epi* + accusative *epi* then has a dynamic meaning and Matthew's emphasis on Jesus "moving forward" on the water).
- Mk 6: 45: *ton ochlon* (the crowd) et Mt 14: 22: *tous ochlous* (the crowds)

f. The case of Greek words with an article or a personal pronoun

It's important to point out the differences between a word with or without a definite article or personal pronoun.

- Mk 6: 45: *tous mathētas autou* (the disciples of him, i.e. his disciples) and Mt 14: 22: *tous mathētas* (the disciples)
- Mk 6: 45: *eis to ploion* (in the boat) and Jn 6: 17: *eis ploion* (in a boat)

2. The parallels between Matthew and Luke are marked by the color blue.

Matthew and Luke sometimes present similar narratives, but these are absent from Mark's Gospel. Biblical scholars consider that Matthew and Luke are drawing their narratives from the Q Document, a source made up mainly of the words of Jesus (see this [page for all the texts that biblical scholars consider to come from the Q Document](#)). In analyzing these parallels, I propose the same method as for the parallels with Mark, except that this time we use the color blue to underline similar words or parts of words. For example, this passage from Jesus' temptations.

Mt 4: 4

Lk 4: 4

ho de apokritheis eipen• gegraptai• ouk ep' artō monō zēsetai ho anthrōpos, all' epi pantī rhēmati ekporeuomenō dia stomatos theou.

kai apekrithē pros auton ho Iēsous• gegraptai hoti ouk ep' artō monō zēsetai ho anthrōpos.

It also happens that a story belongs to Q Document according to the biblical scholars, but that Mark also knows this story from another source. In these situations, we apply both methods, i.e. we underline words or parts of words in Mark that are also found in Matthew and Luke, and we highlight in blue similar words or parts of words in Matthew and Luke. This makes it easier to understand what the two sources have in common. For example, the commissioning speech.

Mk 6: 11

Mt 10: 14

Lk 10: 10-11a

kai hos an topos mē dexētai hymas mēde akousōsin hymōn, ekporeuomenoi ekeithen ektinaxate ton choun ton hypokatō tōn podōn hymōn eis martyriōn autois.

kai hos an mē dexētai hymas mēde akousē tous logous hymōn, exerchomenoi exō tēs oikias ē tēs poleōs ekeinēs ektinaxate ton koniorton tōn podōn hymōn.

eis hēn d' an polin eiselhēte kai mē dechōntai hymas, exelthontes eis tas plateias autēs eipate• kai ton koniorton ton kollēthenta hēmin ek tēs poleōs hymōn eis tous podas apomassometha hymin•

However, apart from references to the Q Document, Matthew and Luke sometimes have similar words that are absent from Mark. In this case, the similarities between Matthew and Luke are purely accidental, the two evangelists having coincidentally made the same lexical choices. Nevertheless, it's worth pointing out these similarities with the color blue.

Mc 2, 21

Oudeis epiblēma rhakous agnaphou epiraptei epi himation palaion• ei de mē airei to plērōma ap' autou to kainon tou palaïou kai cheiron schisma ginetai.

Mt 9, 16

oudeis de epiballei epiblēma rhakous agnaphou epi himatiō palaiō• airei gar to plērōma autou apo tou himatiou kai cheiron schisma ginetai.

Lc 5, 36

Elegen de kai parabolēn pros autous hoti oudeis epiblēma apo himatiou kainou schisas epiballei epi himation palaion• ei de mē ge, kai to kainon schisei kai tō palaiō ou symphōnēsei to epiblēma to apo tou kainou.

For the application of this technique to all texts attributed to the Q Document source, see this [page dedicated to the Q Document](#)

3. Parallels between John and the other Gospels are marked in red.

According to biblical scholars, John did not know the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. However, when we study the parallels with John, we sometimes find words or parts of words from Matthew and Luke that do not come from Mark. How can we explain this?

The first explanation is pure chance. Sometimes, when editing a scene, different authors, without knowing each other, use similar literary devices. These are words from John that also appear in either Matthew or Luke, but not in Mark. This is the case with the Greek particle *de* (then, but), which the authors constantly use to connect the different moments of a narrative: thus, in the account of the walk on the waters, while Mark (6:47) writes: *kai opsias genomenēs* (And an evening having come), John (6:16) writes: *hōs de opsia egeneto* (Then, as an evening came) and Mt (14:23) writes: *opsias de genomenēs* (Then, an evening having come). Clearly, Matthew is copying Mark's account here, but takes the liberty of modifying Mark's *kai* (and) with the particle *de* (then), and it's fortuitous that in this his text resembles John's, which also uses the particle *de*.

A second explanation is much more complex. For example, how can we explain the fact that the word "stadia" (Jn 6:10) is also found in Mt 14:24, and that the word "fear" (Jn 6:19) also appears in Mt 14:26? Is this pure chance? Many biblical scholars doubt this, and opt for the hypothesis that several sources circulated on this story. This is the case of M.E. Boismard (see [Synopse des quatre évangiles](#), t. 2, p. 225-227 on walking on the waters), for whom Mark's Gospel combined two different accounts, called Document A and Document B, that John used Document B, that Matthew used an intermediate edition of Mark before his final edition, to which a Lucan author would have given a final touch.

Without entering into a theory as complex as Boismard's, marking parallels between John and Luke/Matthew in red allows us to identify the similarity between various ancient traditions to which the Gospels had access, in particular to spot a number of traditions common to John and Luke, such as the miraculous fishing (Lk 5 || Jn 21), and above all a great deal of literary kinship, i.e. many particular words or expressions peculiar to both of them: *geitonas* (neighbors), *met' ou pollas hēmeras* (after not many days), *kai ekei* (and there), *boskein* (to graze), *panta ta ema sa estin* (all things mine yours is), *en hēmin* (among us), *peri autou* (about him), *meta tauta* (after these things), etc.

Example: applying this technique to walking on water:

Mark	Matthew	John
6, 45 <u>Kai euthys ēnankasen tous mathētas autou embēnai eis to ploion kai proagein eis to peran pros Bēthsaidan, heōs autos apolyei ton ochlon.</u>	14, 22 <u>Kai euthēōs ēnankasen tous mathētas embēnai eis to ploion kai proagein auton eis to peran, heōs hou apolysē toys ochloys.</u>	6, 16-17a <u>Hōs de opsia egeneto katebēsan ohi mathētai autou epi tēn thalassan. kai embantes eis ploion ērchonto peran tēs thalassēs eis Kapharnaoum. kai skotia ēdē egegonei kai oupō elēlythei pros autous ho Iēsous,</u>
6, 46 <u>kai apotaxamenos autois apēlthen eis to oros proseuxasthai.</u>	14, 23a <u>kai apolysas tous ochλους anebē eis to oros kat' idian proseuxasthai.</u>	[6, 15b <u>anechōrēsen palin eis to oros</u>]
6, 47 <u>kai opsias genomenēs ēn to ploion en mesō tēs thalassēs, kai autos monos epi tēs gēs. kai idōn autous basanizomenoys en tō elainein, ēn gar ho anemos enantios autois,</u>	14, 23b-24 <u>opsias de genomenēs monos ēn ekei. to de ploion ēdē stadious pollous apo tēs gēs apeichen basanizomenon hypo tōn kymatōn, ēn gar enantios ho anemos.</u>	[6, 15c <u>autos monos.</u>] [6, 16a <u>Hōs de opsia egeneto</u>] 6, 18-19a <u>hē te thalassa anemoy megalou pneontos diegeireto. elēlakotes oun hōs stadious eikosi pente ē triakonta</u>

6, 48 <i>peri <u>tetartēn phylakēn tēs nyktos erchetai pros autous peripatōn epi tēs thalassēs kai ēthelen parelthein autous.</u></i>	14, 25 <i><u>tetartē de phylakē tēs nyktos ēlthen pros autous peripatōn epi tēn thalassan.</u></i>	6, 19a <i>theōrousin ton Iēsoun <u>peripatoynnta epi tēs thalassēs kai engys tou ploiou ginomenon,</u></i>
6, 49-50a <i><u>hoi de idontes auton epi tēs thalassēs peripatounta edoxan hoti phantasma estin, kai anekraxan</u>• pantes gar auton eidon kai <u>etarachthēsan.</u></i>	14, 26 <i><u>hoi de mathētai idontes auton epi tēs thalassēs peripatounta etarachthēsan legontes hoti phantasma estin, kai apo tou phobou ekraxan.</u></i>	6, 19b <i>kai ephobēthēsan.</i>
6, 50b <i><u>ho de euthys elalēsen met' autōn, kai legei autois</u>• <u>tharseite, egō eimi</u>• <u>mē phobeisthe.</u></i>	14, 27 <i><u>euthys de elalēsen [o Iēsous] autois legōn</u>• <u>tharseite, egō eimi</u>• <u>mē phobeisthe.</u></i>	6, 20 <i><u>ho de legei autois</u>• <u>egō eimi</u>• <u>mē phobeisthe.</u></i>
	14, 28 <i>apokritheis de autō ho Petros eipen</i> • <i>kyrie, ei sy ei, keleuson me elthein pros se epi ta hydata.</i>	
	14, 29 <i>ho de eipen</i> • <i>elthe. kai katabas apo tou ploiou [ho] Petros periepatēsen epi ta hydata kai ēlthen pros ton Iēsoun.</i>	
	14, 30 <i>blepōn de ton anemon [ischyron] ephobēthē, kai arxamenos katapontizesthai ekraxen legōn</i> • <i>kyrie, sōson me.</i>	
	14, 31 <i>eutheōs de ho Iēsous ekteinas tēn cheira epelabeto autou kai legei autō</i> • <i>oligopiste, eis ti edistasas;</i>	
6, 51-52 <i><u>kai anebē pros autous eis to ploion kai ekopasen ho anemos, kai lian [ek perissou] en heautois existanto</u>• <u>ou gar synēkan epi tois artois, all' ēn autōn hē kardia pepōrōmenē.</u></i>	14, 32-33 <i><u>kai anabantōn autōn eis to ploion ekopasen ho anemos. hoi de en tō ploiō prosekynēsan autō legontes</u>• <u>alēthōs theou huios ei.</u></i>	6, 21 <i>ēthelon oun labein <u>auton eis to ploion</u>, kai eutheōs egeneto <u>to ploion epi tēs gēs eis hēn hypēgon.</u></i>

C. Applying this technique to the English translation text

When the parallels between the Gospels are presented not in Greek, but in translation, particular difficulties arise. While respecting the three types of notation we have proposed, they sometimes need to be adapted to the specific configurations of a given language. Note that, despite the most literal translations possible, there are nuances in Greek that cannot be reproduced in English. Conversely, English sometimes offers possibilities not available in Greek, for example with the present participle: in English, the present participle of two different verbs can be underlined by the auxiliary (having, being), whereas in Greek this is not possible due to the different forms. It's also worth noting that certain words may need to be added to a translation, words that are not present in Greek but are necessary in English to understand the sentence; in this case, any additions are placed in brackets.

1. Identical words in Greek

When presenting the parallels in their English version, the same principles apply. But to achieve this, you need to produce the most literal translation possible. For example, avoid translating *ho oikos mou oikos proseuchēs* as: "my house a house of prayer", but rather by: "the house of me a house of prayer", to emphasize the definite article 'the' (ho).

- Mk 11: 17: the house of me a house of prayer et Mt 21: 13: the house of me a house of prayer et Lk 19: 46: the house of me a house of prayer

However, every translation has its limits. So it won't be possible to really make out a difference in cases, for example, where one evangelist uses *oikos* to designate the house, and another *oikia*.

2. Partially identical words in Greek

- a. The Greek words are virtually identical, but with different spellings.

We suggested that, for almost identical words in Greek with only a variation in spelling, similar letters should be underlined. This was the case, for example, with the adverb *euthys* (immediately) in Mark, *eutheōs* in Matthew. In English, the difference can be highlighted by partially underlining the word.

- Mk 6: 45: immediately et Mt 14: 22: immediately

b. Greek verbs in different tenses.

For identical verbs in different tenses, simply underline the identical letters.

- Mk 6: 45: he unties (*apolyei*: present indicative tense) and Mt 14: 22: he might untie (*apolysē*: aorist subjunctive)

But English doesn't always allow you to reproduce a difference in verb tenses. For example, the verb "to put" becomes "they put" in the present indicative, and also "they put" in the preterite, whereas in Greek we have *ballousin* in the present indicative and *ebalan* in the aorist. You can opt for partial underlining to highlight the difference. This may happen for irregular verbs that do not change like: to cost, cut, hit, put, shut, spread, set, etc.

Conversely, English sometimes allows underlining different verbs in the same tense, which is not possible in Greek.

- Mk 6: 46: "having sent away [the crowd]" (*apotaxamenos*: aorist participle) and Mt 14: 23: "having untied [the crowd]" (*apolysas*: aorist participle)

c. Greek compound verbs

With verbs made up using prepositions as prefixes: *en-*, *ana-*, *kata-*, *para-*, it's often impossible to render their Greek nuance in English, so we translate them with the same verb, whereas in Greek one of the evangelists uses the verb with the prefix, and the other doesn't, or uses a different prefix. My suggestion is to partially underline the verb to make it clear that it's not exactly the same verb. This is sometimes a challenge when the Greek verb with a prefix and the one without a prefix don't translate the same way; nevertheless, the word is partially underlined to convey the similarity and the difference.

- Mk 6: 41: he broke (*kateklasen*) and Mt 14: 19: breaking (*klasas*)
- Mk 6: 49: they cried out (*anekraxan*) and Mt 14: 26: they cried (*ekraxan*)

d. Number in Greek words

In English, it's easy to represent the singular or plural and show the differences by underlining only the identical letters. For example:

- Mk 6: 45: "crowd" and Mt 14: 22: "crowds"

e. Cases in Greek words

Unlike Greek, where the form of the word varies according to the case, words in English don't vary according to the role they play in the sentence. In this case, you can opt for partial underlining to highlight the difference.

- Mk 6: 48: "upon the sea (*epi* + genitive)" and Mt 14: 25: "upon the sea (*epi* + accusative)"

f. Articles and possessive adjectives

There are a number of differences between Greek and English. In Greek, there is no indefinite article as such, as in English "a", which is rather expressed by the absence of an article. If, for example, Mark and another evangelist associate a definite article with one word, and not a third, then in English the definite article is underlined in the first two evangelists, and the "a" is not underlined in the third. As for the personal pronoun *autos* (he, she, they), usually translated by a possessive adjective, I think it's important to opt for a literal translation of the Greek. For example, the expression *tous mathētas autou* is translated by our Bibles as: his disciples. But in doing so, they obliterate the Greek article (*tous*). I prefer to translate it literally as: the disciples of him, which brings out both the article and the personal pronoun.

- Mk 6: 45: "the disciples of him" and Mt 14: 22: "the disciples"
- Mk 6: 45: into the boat (*eis to ploion*) and Jn 6: 17: into a boat (*eis ploion*)

Example: applying this technique to walking on water:

Mark	Matthew	John
6:45 <u>And immediately he compelled the disciples of him to embark into the boat and to go before to the other side, toward Bethsaida, until he himself unties the crowd.</u>	14:22 <u>And immediately he compelled the disciples to embark into the boat and to go before him to the other side, until he would untie the crowds</u>	6:16-17 Then, when evening came, <u>the disciples of him</u> went down upon the sea, and, <u>embarking into a boat</u> , they were going <u>to the other side</u> of the sea, to Capernaum. And already it had become dark and Jesus had not come to them.
6:46 <u>And having taken leave of them, he came away to the mountain to pray</u>	14:23a <u>And having untied the crowds he went up to the mountain by himself to pray;</u>	[6:15b he withdrew again <u>to the mountain,</u>]
6:47 And, <u>evening having come</u> , was <u>the boat</u> in the midst of <u>the sea</u> and <u>himself alone</u> upon <u>the land</u> . And having seen them <u>being tormented to row, because was the wind adverse was adverse</u> to them.	14:23b-24 <u>then, evening having come, alone he was</u> there. Then, <u>the boat</u> already several <u>stadia</u> from <u>the land</u> it was far, <u>being tormented</u> by the waves, <u>because the wind was adverse</u> .	[6:15c <u>himself alone.</u>] [6:16a Then , as <u>evening came</u>] 6:18-19a and <u>the sea</u> by great <u>wind</u> blowing was agitated. Therefore having <u>rowed</u> about <u>stadia</u> twenty or thirty,
6:48 Around a <u>fourth watch of the night, he comes towards them walking upon the sea</u> and he was wishing to pass by them.	14:25 <u>Then, (at) fourth watch of the night, he came towards them walking upon the sea.</u>	6:19b They observe the Jesus <u>walking upon the sea</u> and near the boat coming.
6:49-50a <u>Then, them, having seen him upon the sea walking, they thought that a ghost it is, and they cried out; for all saw him and were troubled.</u>	14:26 <u>Then, the disciples having seen him walking upon the sea, they were troubled</u> saying <u>that a ghost it is, and from the fear they cried.</u>	6:19c and they feared .
6:50b <u>Then, him, immediately he spoke with them, and says to them: Take courage! Me, I am! Don't be afraid!</u>	14:27 <u>Then, immediately he spoke [the Jesus] to them saying, Take courage! Me, I am! Don't be afraid!</u>	16:20 <u>Then, him, he says to them: Me, I am! Don't be afraid!</u>
	14:28 Then, having answered him, Peter said, Lord, if it is you, command me to come towards you on the waters.	
	14:29 Then, him, he said, Come. And having descended from the boat, Peter walked upon the waters and came to Jesus.	
	14:30 Then, then looking at the [mighty] wind, and he feared, and began to be submerged in the sea, and cried, saying, "Lord, save me	
	14:31 Then, immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"	
6:51-52 <u>and he went up towards them into the boat and the wind ceased</u> , and extremely [beyond measure] they were stunned, for they had not understood about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.	14:32-33 <u>and</u> them, having <u>gone up into the boat, the wind ceased</u> . Then those in the boat prostrated [before] him, saying, "Truly, of God, son, you are	6:21 So, they were willing to receive him <u>into the boat</u> and immediately it came to pass the boat upon the land to which they were going.

D. General comments on parallel analysis

Parallel analysis is most often applied to the Synoptic narratives, since these are the Gospels that offer the most similar scenes. It also applies to John insofar as there are certain scenes he shares with the Synoptics. Note that two passages from the same gospel can be compared.

1. Identifying literary changes

Within the framework of the two-source theory, parallel analysis enables us to identify what Matthew and Luke have copied from Mark, what modifications they have made to their source, or what they have added either on their own or using a source of their own. These modifications may be a question of style or theology.

Let's start with the changes for **literary** reasons.

- a. For example, Mark's style is rough and cluttered to the point of obscurity. Matthew, on the other hand, likes things clear and well-structured. So, when he takes up Mark's text, he regularly brings some order to it. Compare Mk 7:6-13 (discussion of the tradition of the elders) with Mt 15:3-9. We have assigned a letter (a, b, c, d) to Mark's ideas. Pay attention to how Matthew changed Mark's order.

Mark 7: 6-13	Mt 15: 3-9
<p>Then he said to them: “ a) It was well prophesied Isaiah concerning you hypocrites, as it was written that this people with their lips they honor me, then the heart of them stands far from me. b) Then, in vain they worship me, teaching teachings [which are] commandments of men, having left the precept of God, you retain the tradition of men. c) And he said to them: “Well, you violate God's commandment in order to keep your tradition. d) For Moses said: “Honor your father and your mother (Ex 20:12), and whoever curses father or mother, let him be punished by death (Ex 21:17). But you, you say: “If a man says to his father or mother: ‘(It is) Corban, i.e. offering, by which you could be helped from me’,” you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother, annulling the word of God by your tradition that you transmit. And such things as this, you (do) many.”</p>	<p>c) He, answering, said to them: “Why do you also transgress God's commandment by your tradition? d) For God has said: “Honor your father and your mother (Ex 20:12), and whoever curses father or mother, let him be punished by death (Ex 21:17). But you, you say: “Whoever says to his father or mother: ‘(It is) an offering that by which you could be helped from me, will no longer have to honor his father or mother.’” And you have nullified the word of God because of your tradition. a) Hypocrites, Isaiah prophesied well of you saying: the people this one with their lips they honor me, then the heart of them stands far from me. b) Then in vain they worship me, teaching teachings [that are] commandments of men,</p>

Note that when we read Mark's text, which begins by calling the Pharisees hypocrites (v. 6), people who teach only human precepts, we are surprised by such harshness and we fail to understand the reason, and it's only at the end that an explanation is given. What does Matthew do? He takes up the same ideas, but reorganizes them differently. We've assigned a letter (a, b, c, d) to Mark's ideas so that we can see how Matthew rearranges them for greater clarity; from the outset Matthew identifies the problem (transgression of God's law) and the attribute "hypocrite" only comes at the end after a lengthy explanation. Note the conciseness of Matthew's text compared to Mark's.

- b. The healing of an epileptic child offers us a fine example of modifications for reasons of literary style. Let's begin by comparing the text of the Synoptics.

Mark 9	Matthieu 17	Luc 9
<p>14 <u>And having come</u> toward the disciples, they saw <u>a crowd large</u> around them and scribes discussing toward them.</p>	<p>14 <u>And having come toward the crowd</u></p>	<p>37 Then, it came to pass the next day, them <u>having come</u> down from the mountain, met him <u>a crowd large</u>.</p>
<p>15 And immediately all the crowd having seen him, they were struck with stupor and running forward they were greeting him.</p>		
<p>16 And he questioned them, "What are you discussing with them?"</p>		
<p>17-18a <u>And</u> answered to <u>him</u> one of <u>the crowd</u>: "<u>Teacher</u>, I brought <u>the son of me</u> toward you, having <u>a spirit</u> mute. And whenever</p>	<p>15 they approached <u>him</u> a man kneeling to him and <u>saying</u>: "Lord, have mercy on <u>the son of me</u>, <u>for</u> he is epileptic and badly suffers. For</p>	<p>38-39 <u>And</u> behold a male from <u>the crowd</u> cried out <u>saying</u>, "<u>Teacher</u>, I implore you to look upon the son of me, <u>for</u> only son to me he is, and</p>

if it might catch him, it dashes him and he <u>foams</u> and he gnashes the teeth and he is withered.	often he falls into the fire and often into the water.	behold a <u>spirit</u> takes him and suddenly it cries and it convulses him with <u>foam</u> and with difficulty it go away from him breaking him.
18b <u>And I said to the disciples of you in order they might cast it out, and they</u> did not have strength.	16 <u>And I brought him to the disciples of you and they</u> were not able to treat him.	40 <u>And implored the disciples of you in order that they might cast out it, and they</u> were not able.
19 <u>Then, him, having answered to them he says, "O generation faithless, until when toward you will I be? Until when will I bear with you? Bring him toward me."</u>	17 <u>Then, having answered, the Jesus said: "O generations faithless and having been perverted, until when with you will I be? Until when will I bear with you? Bring him to me here."</u>	41 <u>Then, having answered, the Jesus said, "O generations faithless and having been perverted, until when will I be toward you and will I bear with you? Lead toward [me] here the son of you.</u>
20 And they brought him toward him. And having seen him, the spirit immediately <u>convulsed</u> him, and having fallen upon the ground he was rolling foaming.		42a Then, when him approaching, it dashed him the demon and it <u>convulsed</u> .
And he questioned the father of him, "How much time it is like this has been happening to him?" Then, him he said, "Out of childhood.		
22 And <u>often</u> and <u>into the fire</u> him he threw <u>and into water</u> , in order it might destroy him. But if anything you are able to, help us having been with compassion over us."	[15b For <u>often</u> he falls <u>into the fire</u> and often <u>into the water</u> .]	
23 Then, the Jesus said to him, "The [word] if I am able, all [things are] possible to the [one] believing.		
24 Immediately having cried the father of the child said, "I believe. Help me in the unbelief.		
25 <u>Then, having seen the Jesus that running together a crowd, he rebuked the spirit the unclean</u> saying to him, "the mute and deaf spirit, I, order you, come out from him, and no longer enter into him."	18a And <u>he rebuked him the Jesus</u>	42b <u>Then, the Jesus rebuked the spirit the unclean</u>
26-27 <u>And</u> having cried and having convulse a lot, <u>it came out</u> . And he became like dead, so that the many [of them] would say that he died. Then, the Jesus seized the hand of him, he rose him up, and he stood up.	18b and it came out from him the demon <u>and</u> was treated the child from this hour.	42c <u>and</u> was healed the child <u>and</u> he gave back him to the father of him.

When Matthew saw Mark's account, he was certainly taken aback by its ambiguous, imprecise, pompous and redundant style. Let's take a closer look at the beginning of Mark's account (9:14): "And coming to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and scribes discussing with them". First of all, what does "they" mean in the phrase "they saw a crowd", this "they" that we also imagine to be the subject of the action "having come toward the disciples". Now, in the previous verse (v. 13), it was Jesus who was speaking in response to Peter, John and James. We must therefore imagine that the subject is no longer the same as in the previous verse, and that "they" refers to Peter, John and James. But now we find ourselves with "[Peter, John, James] having come toward the disciples." Which disciples are we talking about, since Peter, John and James are disciples? So we have to assume that we're talking about the other disciples of Jesus who weren't with him on the mount of transfiguration. And we understand that the "them" ("around them", "discussing with them") refers to these other disciples. Given these ambiguities, what does Matthew do? He eliminates Mark's lengthy introduction with the other disciples, the crowd's reaction and Jesus' questioning of the subject under

discussion, and gets straight to the point of the story: they (Peter, John, James and Jesus) move towards the crowd, and from this crowd approaches an individual asking Jesus to have mercy on his son. Luke makes similar changes: first of all, he keeps the same subject as in the previous verse, i.e. Jesus, and he too goes straight to the point with the intervention of a man from the crowd.

When we look at what Matthew and Luke have eliminated from Mark's account, we see that they have kept only the essentials: a man's request to intervene on behalf of his son, a very brief description of the illness (a case of epilepsy), the mention of the disciples' inability to heal, Jesus' intervention, which simply rebukes the source of the evil, and finally the mention of the healing. Luke adds the crowd's reaction to complete the 5th stage of a miracle story (on the stages of a miracle story, see [the structure of miracle stories](#)).

All this highlights the particularities of Mark's style. First and foremost, he is a great storyteller. Like all great storytellers, he lengthens his narrative to include a host of dramatic details. He doesn't just like to mention things, he wants us to see them. Thus, in Mk 9:16, Jesus asks the crowd a question: "What were you discussing with them?" What does "them" mean? The other disciples, the scribes? Instead of a simple answer, Mark offers a long narrative. He multiplies the details of the child who is thrown to the ground, who foams, gnashes his teeth, rolls on the ground, is shaken violently, thrown into fire and water, becomes stiff. He sometimes dares to repeat himself, or probably he merges two stories; twice he mentions that the child is thrown to the ground and foams. He introduces anecdotal details: these phenomena have been happening since childhood. Even when Jesus commands the unclean spirit to come out of the child, the latter becomes as if dead, and in the description of Jesus' gesture of raising him, Mark uses two words used for Jesus' resurrection of the dead: to raise up, to stand up. Even in Jesus' words, there is something solemn and dramatic: "I order you... go out... enter no longer". Mark's text is worthy of a film script.

2. Identifying theological changes

An evangelist may make changes not only for literary reasons, but also for **theological** reasons.

- a. For example, Matthew's disciples act as intermediaries between Jesus and the crowd, a likely echo of the role played by preachers or missionaries in his community. Compare Mt 15:22-25 and Mk 7:25: in Matthew, it is the disciples who urge Jesus to act.

Mark 7

25a But a woman, immediately having heard about it, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit,

25b having come, fell prostrate at his feet. 26 Then, the woman was Greek, Syrophenician by race, was asking him that he should cast forth the demon out of her daughter.

Matthew 15

22 And behold a woman Canaanite from these boundaries having come out, was crying out saying, "Have mercy on me, lord, son of David; the daughter of me badly is possessed by a demon".

23 Then him he did not answer her a word. And having come near the **disciples** of him were asking him saying: "Dismiss her, because she cries out from behind us".

24 Then him, having answered he said: I was not sent, if not towards the sheep the having been lost of house of Israel.

25 Then her, having come, was paying homage to him saying: master, come to the aid of me.

- b. Matthew emphasizes the disciples' role as intermediaries when Jesus feeds the crowd. Compare Mk 6:41b with Mt 14:19b; note that Mt uses the word "disciple" twice.

Mark 6

41b: and he was giving to his disciples so that they might set before [the loaves] before them

Matthew 14

19b: and having broken, to the disciples the loaves, then disciples to the crowds

- c. Another example. In the account of the walk upon the sea, Mark and Matthew present two different situations: for Mark it is the disciples who are tormented, no doubt an echo of the Christians persecuted by Nero in Rome; for Matthew, it is the boat that is tormented, no doubt an echo of the Church of Antioch harassed by the Jewish community.

Mark 6

Matthew 14

47 And, evening having come, was the boat in the midst of the sea and himself alone upon the land. And having seen them being tormented to row, because was the wind adverse was adverse to them.

23b-24 then, evening having come, alone he was there. Then, the boat already several stadia from the land it was far, being tormented by the waves, because the wind was adverse.

- d. An interesting example of the power of parallel analysis is given by the pericope of the salt that loses its flavor.

Mark 9: 50	Matthew 5: 13	Luke 14: 34 - 35
Good [is] <u>the salt</u> . <u>Then, if the salt has become</u> without salt, <u>with what</u> will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.	You, you are <u>the salt</u> of the <u>earth</u> . <u>Then, if the salt has become crazy</u> , <u>with what will it be</u> salted? <u>For</u> nothing <u>it is</u> strong, except it should be <u>thrown out</u> , to be trampled by men.	Therefore, good [is] <u>the salt</u> . <u>Then, if the salt has become crazy</u> , <u>with what will it be</u> seasoned? Neither <u>for</u> [the] <u>earth</u> nor for [the] manure <u>it is</u> appropriate, <u>out</u> they <u>throw</u> it. Let anyone with ears to hear listen.

As we can see, Jesus' words on salt have come down to us in two traditions, Mark's (reflected by the underlined words), and the Q Document's (the words colored blue). Luke makes the greatest effort to integrate the two traditions. According to M.E. Boismard, the Q Document would have taken the following form: "If the salt becomes foolish, what will it be salted with? Neither for the earth, nor for the manure it is suitable: outside it is thrown away." So, Luke is the one who most respects the Q Document. Note that this refers to two things: an agricultural practice attested in Egypt and Palestine as early as the first century, in which salt was added to manure to make it more suitable for fertilizing the earth; then, according to the OT (e.g. Isa 19:11-12b or Jer 10:14) becoming fooling or going mad always appears in a context where wisdom is spoken of. But in this comparative analysis, we want to emphasize above all that Matthew, by placing this pericope immediately after the Beatitudes, intends to remind Christians of their mission: to make known to the world the wisdom of the Beatitudes, which will enable the world to bear all its fruit. Note that Matthew has omitted the word "manure", either because he was uncomfortable with it, or because he felt it detracted from his point. Luke placed this pericope in a sequence of words about the conditions for following Jesus, and if the disciple doesn't take this path, he loses his identity, like salt unable to season.

- e. Analysis of the parallels allows us to observe the theological evolution of the place of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus.

Mark 1	Matthew 3	Luke 3	John 1
9b-10 and was <u>baptized</u> into the <u>Jordan</u> by <u>John</u> . And <u>immediately ascending</u> out of <u>the water</u> , <u>he saw</u> being split <u>the heavens</u> and <u>the spirit</u> like a <u>dove</u> <u>descending</u> into <u>him</u> .	16 Then, having been <u>baptized</u> , the Jesus <u>immediately ascended</u> from <u>the water</u> ; and behold were <u>opened</u> [to him] <u>the heavens</u> and <u>he saw</u> [the] <u>spirit</u> of [the] God <u>descending</u> like a <u>dove</u> [and] coming <u>upon</u> <u>him</u> .	21b-22a and Jesus having been <u>baptized</u> and being praying, to be <u>opened</u> <u>the heaven</u> , and to <u>descend</u> <u>the spirit</u> the <u>holy</u> in bodily appearance <u>like a dove</u> <u>upon</u> <u>him</u>	32-33 And <u>John</u> bore witness saying, I have observed <u>the spirit</u> <u>descending</u> like a <u>dove</u> out of <u>heaven</u> , and it remained <u>upon</u> <u>him</u> . And I did not know him; but the (one) having sent me to <u>baptize</u> in <u>water</u> , that one said to me, <u>upon</u> whom perchance you would <u>see</u> <u>the spirit</u> <u>descending</u> and remaining upon <u>him</u> , this one is the (one) <u>baptizing</u> in <u>spirit</u> <u>holy</u> .

Mark alone describes the event of Jesus' baptism: "Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan". But this baptism posed a problem for Christians: how could Jesus have been baptized by someone inferior to him? Ten years

later, around the year 80, Matthew expresses this uneasiness with the scene (which precedes our pericope) in which John the Baptist objects to Jesus' visit to be baptized. From then on, he simply refers to Jesus' baptism as a past event ("having been baptized"). As for Luke (c. 85), not only is Jesus' baptism a past event, but he hides it within the group of the baptism of all the people ("once all the people had been baptized and at the time when Jesus, too, was baptized"). Finally, John (circa 90 or 95) completely obliterates this baptism, making John a witness to Jesus' reception of the Holy Spirit.

f. Another example of modifications for theological reasons is given by the following passage:

Mark 10:17b	Matthew 19:16b	Luke 18:18b
" <u>Good teacher, what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?</u> "	" <u>Teacher, what good shall I do that I might have eternal life?</u> "	" <u>Good teacher, having done what will I inherit eternal life?</u> "

While Luke adopts Mark's text almost exactly as it is, Matthew makes two changes for theological reasons:

- He has not retained Mark's expression "Good teacher" for a reason that is easy to guess, as it leads to a remark by Jesus that finds the title "good" inappropriate in his regard, which is a little shocking for a Matthew who insists on the contrary on Jesus' sovereignty. He transforms the discussion by turning it to the question of what is good (what good shall I do?).

Another transformation effected by Matthew concerns eternal life, which is no longer something future, promised beyond death and final judgment. Indeed, Mark uses the verb "to inherit", which refers to something that will happen later. For Matthew, on the other hand, eternal life is something present, something we can "possess".

g. An interesting example of Luke's theology is the account of Jesus' temptations from the Q Document.

Matthew 4	Luke 4
8-9 Again the devil takes him with him to an exceedingly high mountain and he shows to him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said to him, all these I give to you, if having fall down (to my feet) you might bow low to me.	5-7 And having led up him, he showed to him all the kingdoms of the universe in moment of time and said to him the devil, to you I will give the authority all this and the glory of them , because to me it has been given over and to whomever I want I give it. Therefore, you if you might bow low before me , it will be to you all.

Luke has a rather negative view of political power, as he takes the trouble to make a little development that this power is entirely in the hands of opposing forces, by God's own will (for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will). This sheds some light on his bias in favor of the poor from the moment of Jesus' birth (the shepherds will be the ones to hear the good news).

h. A revealing passage with different theological emphases is that of the Lord's Prayer, which Matthew and Luke take from the Q Document source.

Matthew 6	Luke 11
9 "Thus therefore pray yourselves, Father of us the (one) in the heavens, may be hallowed the name of you.	2a Then, he said to them, "When you might pray , say: ' Father, may be hallowed the name of you.
10 May come the kingdom of you. May happen the will of you, as in heaven also on earth.	2b May come the kingdom of you.
11 The bread of us the sufficient give us today.	3 The bread of us the sufficient give us the by day.
12 And remit us the debts of us , as also, us, we remit to the debtors of us.	4a And remit us the sins of us , for also we, we remit to all having debts with us.

13 And you should not bring us into trial, but deliver us from the evil."

4b And you should not bring us into trial"

Let's make a few observations.

- Firstly, Luke's way of addressing God is direct and more intimate: Father / dad; whereas Matthew's "Father of us the (one) in the heavens" is more ritualized and presupposes a community.
- Matthew adds: "May happen the will of you, as in heaven also on earth". We have here a typical touch of Matthew who, as a good Jew, insists on action or orthopraxis. It's his way of taking up the Jewish Law, but Christianizing it. This insistence recurs throughout his Gospel: "It is not by saying to me, Lord, Lord, that one will enter the kingdom of heaven, but by doing the will of my Father who is in heaven". (Mt 7: 21); "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother." (Mt 12: 50); "Which of the two has done the will of the Father" (Mt 21: 31: parable of the two sons). Speaking to Greeks, Luke feels no need to take up the idea of a new Law.
- By modifying the request for bread "today" to say "every day" instead, Luke insists on the idea that the Christian life is a long journey that requires a lot of perseverance, as he does several times in his Gospel: "And he said to everyone: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk 9:23); "And what is in the good soil are those who, having heard the Word with a noble and generous heart, retain it and bear fruit by their perseverance" (Lk 8:15); "It is by your perseverance that you will save your lives!" (Lk 21:19).
- Rather than saying "remit us the debts of us", as the Q Document probably indicated, and which Matthew took up unchanged, Luke writes: "remit us the sins of us". Why is this? Probably because the notion of fault as debt, typical of the Jewish milieu, was more difficult to understand in its Greek counterpart, and speaking of sin was probably clearer.

3. Identifying the evangelist's sources

Analysis of the parallels highlights the various sources from which the evangelists drew, and their art of weaving them together into a continuous narrative.

- This is the case with the sending out of the Twelve on mission, as described by Mark (7: 10), but also found in the Q Document. What do Matthew and Luke, who know both Mark and the Q Document, do? They merge the two accounts (see [parallels Mk 6 || Mt 10 || Lk 9 || Lk 10](#)). What's more, to the account of the sending out of the Twelve (ch. 9), Luke adds a sending out of 72 disciples (ch. 10), copied on the model of the sending out of the Twelve. Why is this? Since his gospel was addressed to Greek converts to the Christian faith, he felt it important to have, in addition to a sending out to the Jews (the Twelve), a sending out to the rest of the world (it was believed that there were 72 nations in the world). This parallel clearly shows what is probably Luke's composition (absence of parallels with the other Gospels in section 10: 17-20).
- Another example is the parable of the mustard seed.

Mark 4	Matthew 13	Luke
30 And <u>he was saying</u> , "How should <u>I compare the kingdom of God</u> or in what <u>parable I should put it</u> ?"	31a Another <u>parable</u> he <u>put</u> before to them <u>saying</u> ,	18 Therefore he <u>was saying</u> , "To what <u>comparable is the kingdom of God</u> and <u>to what will I compare it</u> ?"
31-32 As <u>a grain of mustard</u> , that when it would be <u>sown</u> upon the earth, <u>smallest</u> being of all the <u>seeds</u> the ones upon the earth, and <u>when</u> it would be sown, it goes up <u>and becomes greater of all the garden plants</u> and it makes <u>branches</u> large, <u>so as</u> it is able under the shade of it <u>the birds of the sky to dwell</u> .	31b-32 " <u>Comparable is the kingdom of heavens to a grain of mustard that having taken a man he sowed</u> in the field of him. On the one hand, <u>the smallest</u> it is <u>of all the seeds</u> , on the other hand <u>when</u> it is <u>grown greater of the garden plants</u> it is and <u>it becomes a tree</u> , so as to come <u>the birds of the sky</u> and <u>to dwell in the branches of it</u> ."	19 <u>Comparable it is to a grain of mustard that having taken a man</u> he cast into a garden of him, and it <u>grew</u> and <u>became</u> into a <u>tree</u> , and <u>the birds of the sky dwell in the branches of it</u> ."

This parallel reveals that Matthew and Luke had before them the parable of the mustard seed from two different sources, Mark and the Q Document. Rather than choosing one version and abandoning the other,

they opted to integrate them into a single narrative. Note that the meaning of both versions is the same: the kingdom of God, despite its humble and almost invisible beginning, will have a dazzling end; it is therefore a call to confidence that the kingdom of God, despite appearances, is making its way and will succeed. But each version has its own particular accent.

In the Q Document, the emphasis is on the contrast between the seed and the tree it has become, where birds take shelter in its branches, an expression inspired by Dan 4:10-12 (according to the LXX), i.e. in the end, all mankind will have a place in this kingdom. In Mark's version, the evangelist takes the trouble to explain to a non-agricultural audience that the mustard seed is the smallest of vegetable plants, he describes its growth until it becomes the largest of vegetable plants, and in the end the birds take shelter under its shade, an expression inspired by Ezek 17:22-24, i.e. the peoples of the earth will be able to find protection under the shade of the kingdom of God. The advantage of identifying two independent sources in this way is that the parable has multiple attestation and probably dates back to the historical Jesus (on this subject, [see Meier](#)).

The art of Matthew and Luke was to lose nothing of the two versions, but to weave them together into a coherent narrative. And each has given them a different role by inserting them into different contexts. Matthew inserted it into his discourse in parables (ch. 13), which contains most of Jesus' parables. It comes after the parable of the tares, where an enemy disrupts the farmer's work, and thus introduces a note of optimism: nothing will prevent the kingdom from unfolding in all its splendor. Luke, for his part, inserted it into the sequence in which Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, after healing a woman bent over in a synagogue on the Sabbath (Lk 13:10-17), which gives rise to a dispute: Jesus' opponents are shamed by Jesus' reply to their protests, while the crowd rejoices at the wonders they see. He coupled it with the parable of the leaven in the dough. In this context, the two parables of the mustard seed and the leaven in the dough reveal the mystery at work: what was observed in the synagogue is a sign that the dynamism of the kingdom is at work and will soon reach its full stature.

- c. The story of the multiplication of the loaves is one of the most complex in terms of sources. Not only does Mark present us with two versions of the multiplication of the loaves, both copied by Matthew, with Luke copying only one, but John also offers his own version. This leaves us with three possible sources: Mark, Q and John. Here, the six narratives are placed in parallel. Because of the length of the story, we have divided it into several stages. And we've adopted the following notation: words from Mark's first account that are also found in the other parallel columns are underlined; words specific to Matthew and Luke alone are in blue; words from John that are found only in Matthew's or Luke's first account, or only in the second account, are in red; finally, words from Mark's 2nd account of the multiplication of the loaves that are also found in Matthew's 2nd account of the multiplication of the loaves are in green.

Mk 6: 32-44	Mt 14: 13-21	Lk 9: 10b-17	Jn 6: 1-13	Mk 8: 1-10	Mt 15: 32-39
Introduction: geographical location					
32 <u>And they went away in the boat into wilderness place by himself.</u>	13a Then, having heard, the Jesus <u>withdrew</u> from there <u>in boat into wilderness place by himself.</u>	10b <u>And</u> having taken along them, he <u>withdrew by himself</u> into a town called Bethsaida	1 After these things, he <u>went away</u> the Jesus over the sea of Galilee of Tiberias.		
Action from the crowd					
33 And they saw them departing and many <u>knew</u> exactly and <u>on foot from all the towns</u> they ran together there and they came before them.	13b And having <u>the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.</u>	11a <u>Then the crowds</u> having <u>kn</u> <u>own followed</u> him.	2 <u>Then</u> , was <u>following him</u> a great <u>crowd</u> , for they were observing the signs which he was doing over those being sick.		
Reaction of Jesus and the disciples					
34-36 <u>And having come out he saw a great crowd and was moved by compassion over them</u> , for they were like sheep not <u>having</u> a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. And	14-15 <u>And having come out he saw a great crowd and was moved over them</u> and <u>healed</u> <u>he</u> disabled persons of them. <u>Then</u> , evening <u>having become, having come towards him the disciples</u>	11b-12 And having welcomed them, he was speaking to them concerning the kingdom of God. And <u>the having</u> <u>ne</u> ed of <u>healing</u> , he was healing. <u>Then</u> , the day began to decline. <u>Then</u> ,	3-5a Then, Jesus went up into the mountain and there he was sitting with <u>the disciples of him</u> . Then it was near the Easter, the feast of the Jews. So having lift up the eyes the Jesus and having	1-3 In these days again <u>a large crowd</u> being and having not something they might eat, <u>having summoned the disciples</u> , he says to them, I am <u>move with compassion upon the crowd</u> ,	32 Then, the Jesus <u>having summoned the disciples</u> of him said, I am <u>move with compassion upon the crowd</u> , for already three days they remain with me and don't <u>have something</u>

already much hour <u>having become, having come towards him the disciples of him, they were saying that desolate is the place and already much hour. Dismiss them, in order that having come away into the surrounding countryside and villages, they might buy themselves something they might eat.</u>	<u>saying, desolate is the place and the hour already has come by. Dismiss the crowds, in order that having come away into the villages they might buy themselves food.</u>	<u>having come towards the twelve, they said to him, dismiss the crowd in order that, having gone into the surrounding villages and the countryside they might lodge and they might find provisions for here in a desolate place we are.</u>	notices that a <u>great crowd</u> is coming towards him,	<u>for already three days they remain with me and don't have something they might eat. And if I would release them hungry into their house, they will faint on the road. And some of them from afar have come.</u>	<u>they might eat. And to release them hungry, I am not willing, lest that they would faint on the road.</u>
Jesus' request					
37a Then, him, having answered, <u>he said to them. Give them yourself to eat.</u>	16 Then, him, [Jesus] <u>said to them, no need they have to come away, give them yourself to eat.</u>	13a Then, he <u>said towards them, give them yourself to eat.</u>	5b-6 he <u>says towards Philip, from where might we buy breads in order that they might eat these? Then, this he was saying testing him; for himself he knew what he was about to do.</u>		
Disciples' objection					
37b And <u>they say to him, having come away, would we buy two hundred denarii of bread and will we give them to eat?</u>	17 Then, them, <u>they say to him, we have not here if not five breads and two fish (ichthys).</u>	13b-14a Then, them they <u>said, there are not to us more than five breads and two fish (ichthys). Unless having gone ourselves, we would buy food for all this people. For they were about five thousand men.</u>	7-9 He <u>answered to him [the] Phillip, breads (for) two hundred denarii do not suffice for them in order that each a little [one] he might receive. He says to him one of the disciples of him, Andrew the brother of Simon Peter, there is a little boy here who has five breads of barley and two fish (opsarion). But these how are they into so many?</u>	4 <u>And they answered him the disciples of him that from where these will be able anyone here to satisfy of breads place?</u>	33 <u>And they say to him the disciples, from where to us in a desolate place so many breads so as to satisfy a crowd so great.</u>
Survey of provisions					
38 Then, him, <u>he says to them, 'how many breads have you? Go, see.'</u> And having known, <u>they say, 'Five, and two fish (ichthys).'</u>				5 <u>And he was questioning them, 'How many breads you have? Then, them they said, Seven.</u>	34 <u>And he says to them the Jesus, 'How many breads you have? Then, them they said, Seven and a few little fish.</u>
Jesus organizes logistics					

39-40 <u>And</u> he called upon them <u>to recline</u> all companies (by) companies <u>over</u> the green <u>grass</u> . And they <u>lied down</u> ranks (by) ranks by a hundred and by <u>fifty</u> .	18-19a <u>Then</u> , him, <u>he said</u> , bring to me here <u>And</u> having command the crowds <u>to recline over the grass</u> ,	14b-15 <u>Then</u> , <u>he said</u> towards the disciples of him, have them reclined groups of <u>about</u> up to <u>fifty</u> . And they did in this way and had them reclined all.	10 <u>He said</u> the Jesus, Make the men to <u>lie down</u> . Then, there was much <u>grass</u> in the place. So the men <u>lied down</u> , the number <u>about</u> five thousand.	6a <u>And</u> he directs the crowd to <u>lie down upon the ground</u> .	35 <u>And</u> having directed the crowd to lie down upon the ground
Jesus breaks the bread and distributes it					
41 And <u>having taken the five breads and the two fish</u> , <u>having looked up into the heaven</u> , <u>he blessed and broke up</u> the bread <u>and he was giving to the disciples</u> [of him], in order that they would <u>set before</u> them, and the two fish (ichthys) he divided among all.	19b <u>having taken the five breads and the two fish</u> , <u>having looked up into the heaven</u> , <u>he blessed and broke</u> , <u>he gave to the disciples</u> the breads, then the disciples to the crowds.	16 Then, <u>having taken the five breads and the two fish</u> , <u>having looked up into the heaven</u> , <u>he blessed them and broke up and was giving to the disciples to set before</u> the crowd.	11 So he <u>took the breads</u> the Jesus <u>and having given thanks</u> , distributed to those reclining, likewise also out of the fish (opsarion) as much as they were wishing.	6b-7 <u>and having taken the seven breads</u> , having given thanks, <u>he broke and was giving to the disciples of him</u> , <u>in order that they set before the crowd</u> . And they were having a few little fish. And having <u>blessed</u> them, he said also to set these before (them).	36 He <u>took the seven breads and the fish and, having given thanks, he broke and he was giving to the disciples</u> , then the disciples to the crowds.
Result of Jesus' action					
42-44 <u>And they ate all and were satisfied</u> , and they <u>took up</u> fullness of fragments, <u>twelve hand-baskets</u> and from the fish. And <u>there were those having eaten</u> [the bread] <u>five thousand men</u> .	20-21 <u>And they ate all and were satisfied</u> , and they <u>took up the being about</u> nding of fragments, <u>twelve full hand-baskets</u> . Then, <u>those eating were men</u> , about <u>five thousand</u> besides women and children.	17 <u>And they ate and they were satisfied all</u> . <u>And was taken up the fragments</u> having <u>been about</u> nding to them, <u>twelve hand-baskets</u> .	12-13 Then, as they were filled, he says to the disciples of him, gather together fragments those having <u>been a about</u> nding, in order that anything would not be lost. So they gathered together and filled <u>twelve hand-baskets of fragments</u> out of the five breads of barley which were <u>abounding</u> to those having taken food.	8-9 <u>And they ate and they were satisfied and they took up</u> abundance of fragments, seven hampers. Then, <u>they were about four thousand</u> .	37-38 <u>And they ate all and they were satisfied and the being about</u> nding of the fragments they <u>took up</u> , seven hampers full. Then, <u>the eating, they were four thousand men</u> besides women and children.

Let's make a few observations.

- i. **Geographical location.** For the first multiplication of loaves, Mk 6:32 and Mt 14:13 place the scene near Capernaum, in the western part of the Lake of Galilee, while in Lk 9:10b and Jn 6:1 everything takes place on the eastern side, in the region of Bethsaida (see the [geography of Galilee](#)). For the second multiplication of the loaves, Mark 8 places the scene in the Decapolis, i.e. in the eastern part of the lake (like Luke and John), while in Matthew Jesus seems to have returned to the Capernaum region. Note that geography has a certain importance in Mark: the Jews live mainly in the western part of the lake, while the Greek-speaking people inhabit the eastern part.

A single word, similar in Matthew and Luke, appears in blue: "to withdraw". In fact, the Greek verb is not quite the same: *ana-choreō* in Matthew, *hypo-choreō*, which in English is translated by the same verb: "to withdraw". Is the use of a similar word in the two evangelists due to chance, or can we speak of a reference to the Q Document? Difficult to answer with so few elements.

- ii. **Action from the crowd.** In Mark 6, the crowds are looking for Jesus, who has left in a boat to isolate himself with his disciples. The evangelist seems to suggest that Jesus wanted to use the boat as a means of transport to cover his tracks. For the boat was not the fastest means of transport, since he adds that the people understood the subterfuge and went ahead of him on foot wherever he went. Luke and John seem to use another source they seem to have in common (what M.E. Boismard calls “proto-Luke”), which tells of a crowd following Jesus; John’s addition that the crowd observed the signs Jesus was operating reflects his own language and editorial work. Luke’s only echo of Mark is the verb “having known” (*ginoskō*), which echoes “they understood” (*epigignōskō*). Matthew, for his part, seems to weave together this source common to Luke and John and that of Mark.
- iii. **Reaction of Jesus and the disciples.** The difference between the six stories is significant. Here’s a diagram of the similarities and differences.

Mark 6	Matthew 14	Luke 9	John 6	Mark 8	Matthew 15
Jesus is moved with compassion before a crowd without a shepherd, and begins to teach them.	Jesus is moved with compassion in front of a crowd and begins to heal.	Jesus is moved with compassion in front of a crowd and begins to heal.	Jesus sits as he does when teaching and observes the crowd.	Jesus is moved with compassion by a crowd that has been with him for three days without eating, and eliminates the solution of sending them away fasting.	Jesus is moved with compassion by a crowd that has been with him for three days without eating, and eliminates the solution of sending them away fasting.
Time and place: it’s the end of the day and we’re in a secluded spot	Time and place: it’s already evening, when there’s nobody travelling on the roads, and we’re in an isolated spot	Time and place: it’s the end of the day, sunset, and we’re in an isolated spot	Time and place: no mention of time, other than that the Jewish Passover is approaching, and for the place, a simple reference to the mountain.	Time and place: There’s no indication in the story itself, but what follows assumes that it’s the middle of the day, as Jesus can then leave in a boat.	Time and place: There’s no indication in the story itself, but what follows assumes that it’s the middle of the day, as Jesus can then leave in a boat.
Intervention by the disciples: they ask Jesus to send the crowd away to buy something to eat in the surrounding farms and villages	Intervention by the disciples: they ask Jesus to send the crowd away to buy something to eat in the villages	Intervention by the disciples: they ask Jesus to send the crowd away to stay and eat in the surrounding farms and villages	Intervention by the disciples: none, because Jesus knows what he’s going to do.	Intervention by the disciples: none, because Jesus knows the problem.	Intervention by the disciples: none, because Jesus knows the problem.

When we examine Jesus’ attitude, we come across four different accounts.

- Mark’s account is unique: he alone tells of Jesus who sees that the crowd is like sheep without a shepherd, and his reaction is to guide them with his teaching.
- In John, Jesus, on his way to the mountain and sitting down with his disciples, seems to be preparing to teach in the context of the approaching Passover. The crowd follows him because of the signs he has performed, in particular the healing of the man at the pool of Bethzatha.
- Matthew and Luke, in their account of the first multiplication of the loaves, even though they have Mark’s Gospel in front of them, do not take up the image of the sheep without a shepherd, but consider that Jesus is moved by compassion in the face of people’s sickness, and so begins to heal. Only Luke offers an echo of Mark’s Jesus who teaches with his Jesus who speaks of the kingdom of

God. Of course, Matthew and Luke echo Mark's expression of a Jesus moved by compassion, even if the object of compassion is not the same.

- In Mark's and Matthew's account of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, the focus is immediately on the hungry crowd, and Jesus himself, not the disciples, takes note. The only difference between Mark and Matthew is the role of the disciples in Matthew, to whom Jesus confides his concern, and the fact that in Matthew Jesus has already made up his mind not to send the crowd away.

Time and place are identical in Mark, Matthew and Luke's first multiplication of the loaves: the hour is late, it's evening, and we're in the middle of nowhere. In John, time and place play no role. In Mark's and John's 2nd multiplication of the loaves, time plays no role, so the question of sending the crowd away as quickly as possible does not arise. The place, on the other hand, seems similar from what follows.

Finally, the question of the disciples' intervention allows us to group the four stories into two groups: those in which the disciples bring Jesus back to the reality of a hungry crowd (first multiplication of the loaves: Mark, Matthew, Luke), and those in which the disciples don't have to intervene (John, and Mark and Matthew of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves).

What can we conclude? We are faced with four different traditions. Yet all four traditions refer to the same event: on this subject, see the [conclusions of J. Meier](#), whose simplest argument, over and above literary arguments, is the fact that during the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, the disciples have no memory of a previous multiplication.

- First, there's the tradition reflected by Mark of a Jesus moved by compassion before the shepherdless crowd to whom he gives his teaching, but who is called to order by the disciples on the concrete situation of this starving crowd.
- Then there's the tradition reflected by Matthew and Luke (an echo of the Q Document?) of a Jesus who intervenes to heal and who is also called to order by the disciples on the concrete situation of this starving crowd.
- John represents an independent tradition that plunges us into a different universe: at the outset, Jesus knows what he will do, in the context of the upcoming Jewish Passover and a teaching to the crowd; there is no pressure to send the crowd away because of the late hour.
- Finally, there's the tradition of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, a modified reworking of the first multiplication in a Greek context: the symbolism of the first multiplication is Jewish (5 loaves an echo of Elisha's 20 loaves, a crowd of 5,000 = 5 loaves x myriad; the 12 baskets left over for the 12 tribes of Israel), the symbolism of the second multiplication is Greek (the number 7, e.g. the 7 loaves and 7 baskets of leftovers, is an important Greek symbol, as is the choice of 7 Hellenistic deacons in Acts, and a crowd of 4,000 = 4 points of the compass x myriad); thus, the tradition of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves circulated in Greek circles, and Mark inserted it into his Gospel, taken up by Matthew. Note the evolution in the figure of Jesus between the first and 2nd multiplication of the loaves in Mark: it has been enhanced, because in the latter case Jesus no longer needs to be informed, he knows what is happening; this is a clue that the story of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves appeared much later, when Christology had evolved.

iv. **Jesus' request.** This section reflects three different traditions. In Mark's tradition, Jesus asks his disciples to feed the crowd themselves. This may seem a surprising request: why ask the disciples to feed the crowd? Do they have more skills for this task than Jesus? One might think that the author of the story, who is addressing Christian communities, intends to challenge the believer: it's your responsibility and your mandate to feed your brothers and sisters. The second tradition is reflected in John, where Jesus does not ask the disciples to feed the crowd, but rather formulates a question to put Philip to the test. Why does this happen? The author intends the story to be a formation in the Christian faith. Finally, in the tradition of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, Jesus does not formulate any request, because according to what precedes and follows, the disciples are inseparable from their master in solving the problem, and after Jesus mentions the dramatic situation, the disciples know that it is up to them to find a solution.

v. **Disciples' objection.** This section plays an important role in understanding the extraordinary nature of the meal that follows: feeding this crowd is humanly impossible. Four different traditions can be identified.

- The tradition reflected by Mark emphasizes the cost of feeding this vast crowd, not the how. The sum of two hundred denarii corresponds to two hundred days' wages for a farm worker, and it's obvious that the disciples don't have that kind of money. So the objection means: it's impossible, we can't afford it.
- The tradition reflected by Matthew and Luke of the first multiplication of the loaves makes no mention of a sum of money, but focuses instead on the stock of food at their disposal: five loaves and two fish; the emphasis is on how little food there is to feed a whole crowd. It's easy to see that this

tradition is independent of Mark. But Luke, who has Mark's Gospel in front of him, makes a point of incorporating some of its elements, such as the purchase of food, without directly mentioning a sum, other than by alluding to the size of the crowd: 5,000 men.

- The tradition reflected by John, independent of the others, nevertheless includes similar elements, such as the sum of two hundred denarii and the presence of five loaves and two fish. The emphasis is on the enormity of the challenge: even with the required sum, each person will have only a small morsel; even the five loaves and two fish are radically insufficient to feed a large crowd. Note the presence together of Philip and Andrew, both from Bethsaida, a town in the Greek Decapolis, who will enter the scene when Greeks want to see Jesus in ch. 12. Note also that the word for fish in John is not the same as in the Synoptics: *opsarion* rather than *ichthys*; *opsarion*, the diminutive of *opson*, is a fish rather small in size.
 - Finally, the tradition reflected in the 2nd multiplication of the loaves doesn't talk about the amount of money or the little food at their disposal. Rather, the challenge is to find all the food they need in the middle of nowhere. Since the disciples are associated with their master, their objection comes from the fact that they themselves are incapable of meeting this challenge; it's humanly impossible.
- vi. **Survey on provisions.** This section has a few surprises in store for us. First of all, we know that the first and second multiplication of the loaves belong to two different traditions. Yet the wording of the inquiry is very similar: "He (Jesus) said to them, 'How many loaves do you have'". Of course, the number varies: five loaves for one, seven loaves for the other. The second surprise is related to the fact that there is no survey of provisions in the first multiplication of loaves in Matthew and Luke. In a way, this is understandable: in the tradition they share on the disciples' objection, the latter have already mentioned that they had only five loaves and two fish, so there's no need for Jesus to inquire. In John's case, it's not surprising that there's no inquiry about provisions, since John's Jesus already participates in divine transcendence and therefore knows what's going on and what he'll do. As for the account of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, Matthew takes the trouble to add the little fish to Mark's account: he likes to improve on Mark's somewhat disheveled account, which does not mention fish here, but will later describe a Jesus who first presents the bread, and then the fish, which arrive as a surprise; Matthew always keeps the mention of the loaves and the fish well welded together. Note that Matthew no longer speaks of two fish, but of "some" fish.
- vii. **Jesus organizes logistics.** Mark's tradition of the first multiplication of the loaves is astonishing for its multiple symbols, starting with that expressed by the Greek word *symposion*, in the plural, which we have translated as "group of guests". In the first instance, the term refers to a banquet, and should have been translated literally as: "Jesus commanded them all to spread out banquets on the green grass". From the rest of the text, we understand that Mark intends to describe groups that form at a banquet, hence our translation: groups of guests. Why speak of a banquet? It's most likely an allusion to the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of God. Another symbol is that expressed by the Greek word *prasia*, which designates the square for gardening, and which we have translated as: square. Why these squares of one hundred and fifty? It's likely that we're dealing here with an allusion to the Jewish people during their exodus in the desert and the way they organized themselves, as expressed for example in Deut 1:15: "To lead you, I then gathered together the wise men of good repute who already had responsibilities in your tribes; I appointed some as leaders of groups of a thousand, a hundred, fifty or ten people. I gave the others supervisory duties in each tribe". Perhaps there is also an allusion to the organization of the first Christian communities, especially in reference to the Eucharistic gathering. Finally, let's mention the symbol of green grass, perhaps a reference to Ps 23:1b-2a: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He gives me rest in green pastures"; this would be a reference to the beginning of the story, where Jesus complains that the crowd seems like sheep without a shepherd.

As for the logistics of this first multiplication of the loaves, Matthew has considerably abridged Mark's text, unless he's using another source. It's as if he completely ignored the symbolism of the eschatological banquet and the Israelite organization in the desert, as well as the allusion to Ps 23. He retains only the succinct command to lie down on the grass; and here he prefers the verb *kaleuō* (to command), which is part of his vocabulary, to Mark's verb *epitassō* (to order), which is not. Luke also seems to ignore Mark's symbolism to keep only the reference to groups of fifty, perhaps a reference to early Church logistics. Moreover, the emphasis is on the disciples, who are in charge of logistics and implement the mandate received from Jesus.

John's tradition is independent of the others, but retains certain similarities: Jesus' request that the people lie down and that there was grass there. Between the different traditions, two verbs are used: to recline (*anaklinō*), to lie down (*anapiptō*); John and the account of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves use "to lie down", while "to recline" is used for the first multiplication of the loaves in the Synoptics, with the exception of Mark who uses both verbs.

In the account of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, the text is even more concise than Matthew's for the first multiplication of the loaves: there's not even any mention of grass, just of lying down on the ground.

There is therefore a certain kinship between this source and the one perhaps used by Matthew and Luke for the first multiplication of the loaves. We get the impression from these traditions that the act of lying down is merely a formality to enable us to move on quickly to what follows.

1. Jesus takes the five loaves and two fish
2. Jesus raises his eyes to heaven
3. Jesus blesses
4. Jesus breaks the bread
5. Jesus gives to the disciples
6. The disciples give to the crowd

The only major difference is that Mark sets aside the distribution of the two fish, which Matthew and Luke do not. In fact, the fish do not fit in well with the gestures surrounding the bread, such as the breaking of the bread. There is a kind of imbalance in Mark's narration, for at the beginning Jesus takes both the five loaves and the two fish, but the fish disappear, only to return at the end. It's clear then that the narrator wants to emphasize the bread, and the fish appear cumbersome. Why is this? The author of the story probably intends to draw a parallel with the Eucharistic gathering of the Christian community, which is centered on bread, and so the fish appear to be too much.

John's version is very particular. Firstly, he describes only three actions: taking the loaves, giving thanks and then distributing the loaves; the distribution of the loaves is a separate gesture. Secondly, there is no mention of there being only five loaves, or two fish; for the fish, it even says: "as many as they wanted were distributed". What's more, Jesus doesn't break the bread. Why did he do this? The simplest answer is that, unlike the Synoptics, Jesus has no Eucharistic scene at his last supper, and therefore no need to allude to it; all references to the significance of Jesus' death will appear in the long discourse that follows this meal. It's also worth noting that, unlike the Synoptic Jesus, who gives the bread to the disciples for distribution, John's Jesus distributes the food himself; all this is in keeping with the transcendent figure of John's Jesus, who does everything by himself. Finally, it's worth noting that instead of using the verb "to bless", John uses "to give thanks". Why does he do this? We'll come back to this below.

The story of the 2nd multiplication of the loaves features the same actions as the first, except for the 2nd action of raising the eyes to heaven, no doubt deemed superfluous. Obviously, instead of the five loaves, we have the number seven, characteristic of a Greek milieu. The major difference between Mark's text and Matthew's is that the latter, rather than following Mark in separating the actions around the bread from those around the fish, integrates them together. Finally, in this second multiplication of the loaves, rather than "blessing", Jesus "gives thanks". It's time to clarify this point.

We have said that Mark's accounts of the multiplication of the loaves are intended to refer to Jesus' last meal before dying. We have four versions of Jesus' Eucharistic words at this last meal: Mark, Matthew, Luke and Paul's words in his first letter to the Corinthians. Let's compare each version. We've underlined the words from Mark that are also found in the other versions. We've highlighted in green the words common to Luke and 1 Corinthians.

Mark 14	Matthew 26	Luke 22	1 Corinthians 11
22a <u>And then they were eating, having taken bread.</u>	26a Then, <u>them they were eating, having taken</u> the Jesus bread.	19a <u>And having taken bread.</u>	23b The Lord Jesus, in the night he was betrayed, he <u>took bread.</u>
22b <u>having blessing, he broke and gave to them and said:</u> "Take, <u>this is the body of me</u> ".	26b <u>having blessing, he broke and having given</u> to the disciples, <u>he said:</u> "Take, eat, <u>this is the body of me</u> ".	19b <u>having given thanks, he broke and gave to them saying:</u> " <u>This the body of me the [one] for you</u> being given. Do this in the remembrance of me.	24 and <u>having given thanks, he broke and said:</u> " <u>This is the body of me the [one] for you.</u> Do this in remembrance of me."
23 <u>And having taken a cup, having given thanks, he gave to them</u> and they drank of it all.	27 <u>And having taken a cup and having given thanks, he gave to them</u> saying: "Drink of it all.	20a <u>And the cup likewise after the supping,</u>	25a Likewise also <u>the cup after the supping,</u>
24 And he <u>said to them:</u> " <u>This is the blood of me of the covenant the [one]</u>	28 For <u>this is the blood of me of the covenant that [is] being</u>	20b <u>saying:</u> " <u>This the cup of the new covenant in the blood of me the</u>	25b <u>saying:</u> " <u>This is the cup of the new covenant in the blood of me.</u> Do this as often

<u>being poured out for many</u> ".	<u>poured out</u> with regard to <u>many</u> towards forgiveness of sins.	<u>[one] for you having poured out</u> .	as you might drink [it] in the remembrance of me.
25 Amen, <u>I say to you</u> that <u>I will drink</u> no more <u>of the product of the vine until that day when I will drink it anew in the kingdom of the God.</u> "	29 Then, <u>I say to you</u> : <u>I will not drink</u> from now on <u>of this, the product of the vine, until that day when I will drink it</u> with you <u>anew in the kingdom of the Father of me</u> "		26 For as often as you might eat this bread and you might drink this cup, the death of the Lord you proclaim the [day] he might come.

Let's make a few observations:

- In the Synoptics' account, we find four of the six actions identified in the multiplication of the loaves: taking the bread, blessing/thanking, breaking the bread and giving it to the disciples; the actions of raising the eyes to heaven and the disciples distributing the food to the crowd have been eliminated.
- In place of the action of distributing the fish, at least in Mark's multiplication of the loaves, we have the actions over the cup: taking the cup, giving thanks and giving it to the disciples; the action of breaking has obviously been eliminated.
- The big difference with the multiplication of the loaves is the meaning given to eating the bread or drinking from the cup. To eat the bread is to eat the body of Jesus, i.e. his whole life is given as food. The meaning of drinking from the blood-coloured wine cup is given by the reference to Deut 24:8: "Then Moses took the blood from the vessels, sprinkled it over the Israelites and said, "This blood confirms the covenant which the Lord made with you, giving you all these commandments"". Blood, the Jewish principle of life, refers to the life that unites the community, and according to Mark's account, to drink the blood is to enter into a community of life with Jesus. At the same time, the blood recalls the tragic end of Jesus, whose blood was shed, and thus a life that was totally given.
- One difference from the multiplication of the loaves: we are now faced with a farewell meal in which the disciples will see Jesus no more, except in the new world beyond: "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the day I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."
- Matthew copies Mark's text almost literally. The most important difference is the addition of the phrase "forgiveness of sins" to the meaning of Jesus' shed blood. Why is this? In the Jewish world, it was customary to offer an animal as a holocaust to ask God for forgiveness of one's sins, since the vital dynamism of blood restored one's relationship with God. In Matthew's community, made up largely of Jewish Christians, it was easy to understand that Jesus' shed blood restored humanity's relationship with God, just as the animal did in Jewish tradition. Finally, we should mention the addition of the word "disciple" in the reference to the bread given (26b), a customary addition in Matthew, who constantly emphasizes the disciples' role as mediators.
- Luke's text differs slightly from Mark's. In fact, it amalgamates two traditions, one handed down by Mark, the other by Paul. The following changes can be noted:
 - Instead of four actions (taking the bread, blessing/thanking, breaking the bread and giving it), there are only three: taking the bread, giving thanks, breaking the bread. Why is this? Because we're squarely within the community's current liturgical framework; whereas Mark's account plunges us into the time of Jesus, when he shared bread with his disciples, the text of Luke/Paul introduces us into the present of the Eucharistic celebration of the first Christian communities.
 - We notice that we're no longer talking about the blessing around the bread, but about thanksgiving. What does this mean? While Jewish Christians continued to use the Jewish expression of blessing around the bread in the Eucharistic gathering, Greek Christians preferred the more familiar expression of "giving thanks". Luke and Paul's audience is Greek. We may have noticed that in John's account of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus also uses the expression "to give thanks" with the bread: this should come as no surprise, since tradition places the author of the 4th Gospel's last stay in Ephesus, a Greek environment. Finally, the two expressions "bless" and "give thanks" are virtually synonymous. Please refer to the [Glossary](#) for an analysis of the word "to bless" in the Old Testament. Let's just say that, in the Jewish tradition, God alone can bless by spreading his benefits, and that when the verb has a human being as subject, it can only

bles in God's name, being simply the mediator of God's action; and in this case, it is synonymous with praising God who gives his benefits through the human being. The question remains: why does Mark use the verb "bless" for the bread, but "give thanks" for the cup? Perhaps he wanted to take into account his hybrid community of Jews and Greeks.

- The Luke/Paul tradition, instead of inviting us to eat the bread and drink from the cup, invites us to remember Jesus' gesture. Why is this? It's possible that in Greek circles, the invitation to eat the body and blood was seen as anthropophagy. What is clear is that, by emphasizing the memorial, we have put the accent on the cross and the death of Jesus; as Paul says: "you proclaim his death whenever you eat of this bread and drink of this cup" (1 Cor 11:26).

viii. **The result of Jesus' action.** We have the impression of four traditions: that of Mark's first multiplication of the loaves, that reflected by the small variations in Matthew and Luke, that of John, and that of Mark's second multiplication of the loaves.

- Mark's account of the first multiplication of the loaves contains three statements: 1) the people were satisfied (a verb used repeatedly in the psalms to speak of God satisfying his people: see Ps 81:17; 107:9; and especially 132:15), 2) of what remained, twelve baskets of loaves and fishes were taken away (so that the twelve apostles could feed the twelve tribes of Israel), 3) and there were five thousand men at this banquet (5 loaves x myriad). Clearly, the story is intended to give catechetical value to these three statements.
- Matthew's account repeats Mark's three statements. But it takes the liberty of adding a note on the number of guests: "separately from women and children". Why is this? No doubt it adds to the number of guests, and therefore to the feat that was achieved. He will also add this note during the 2nd multiplication of the loaves. Moreover, Matthew insists that the twelve baskets were "full". Now, how to explain the use of the verb "to abound" (*perisseuō*), which he also uses in the 2nd multiplication of the loaves, and which does not appear in Mark, but does appear in Luke and John. Pure chance? It's possible that Matthew and Luke knew of a tradition similar to Mark's that used this verb, and that John knew of a variant of this tradition that also used this verb.
- Luke's version contains only two statements: the people are filled and twelve baskets are taken away. The statement about the five thousand men came earlier in his narrative, when the disciples objected to the request to feed the crowd. As usual, John presents us with an original version of the narrative, with a vocabulary that has little in common with Mark's: the people are not "satiated" (*chortazō*), but "replete" or "filled" (*empiplēmī*); it is Jesus who commands the leftovers to be gathered up, which the disciples do exactly as instructed; it is Jesus who wants nothing to go to waste, no doubt to emphasize that this food is precious; twice the word "to abound" is used, no doubt to emphasize the abundance of what has been offered; again, John speaks of barley bread, the same bread as in the account of Elisha (2 Kings 4:42-44).
- The second multiplication of loaves in Mark and Matthew repeats the three statements of the first multiplication, except that the numbers have changed: it's no longer five loaves, but seven; it's no longer five thousand men, but four thousand. We explained the reason for this change in numbers above. A minor detail: we no longer speak of baskets (*kophinos*), but of hampers (*spyris*). Note that Matthew makes the same changes to Mark's text as he did for the first multiplication of the loaves: what was "abundant" was taken away, the baskets were "full", and there were 4,000 people "separately from women and children".
- When we consider the final outcome, we are struck by this: nobody seems surprised by what happened, neither the disciples nor the crowd. Yet the disciples insisted that it was impossible to feed this crowd. Why now, faced with the final result, are there no words of wonder or amazement? It's as everything went as scheduled, so much so that the table is simply cleared away after the meal. This is one reason why some biblical scholars do not classify this story as a miracle. We don't know exactly what happened, and many elements of our story are colored by Elisha's account and by the setting of the Eucharistic celebrations. [J.P. Meier, in his analysis of this story](#), acknowledges that the narrative probably dates back to the historical Jesus, but at the same time speaks simply of a "memorable meal".

4. Identifying the target audience of the evangelist

Analysis of the parallels allows us to identify the milieu the evangelist is addressing.

- a. For example, the dispute over the Jewish tradition of ritual ablutions before eating.

Mark 7	Matthew 15	Luke
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1 And are gathered together toward him, the <u>Pharisees</u> and some <u>scribes</u> having come <u>from Jerusalem</u> .	1 Then, they come to Jesus <u>from Jerusalem</u> <u>Pharisees and scribes</u>	
2 And they have seen some of the disciples that with some common hands, these are unwashed, they eat the breads.		
3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews, if not to fist they might wash the hands, they do not eat, holding the tradition of the elders.		
4 And from the market, if they might not wash, they do not eat, and other many [things] are that they welcome with them to hold, washing of cups and pots and bronze vessels and beds.		
5 And they questioned him the Pharisees and the scribes, "For <u>why</u> they do not walk <u>the disciples of you</u> according to <u>the tradition of the elders</u> , but with common <u>hands they eat the bread</u> .	saying, 2 "For <u>why</u> the <u>disciples of you</u> turn aside <u>the tradition of the elders</u> ? For they do not wash the <u>hands</u> of them <u>they</u> would <u>eat bread</u> .	

The difference between Mark, Matthew and Luke is striking. In this dispute, Mark gives a lengthy introduction to the Jewish ritual of ablutions, while Matthew goes straight to the Pharisees' question, and Luke ignores this account. How can these different approaches be explained? Mark, who is probably addressing the Christian community in Rome, many of whom seem to know nothing about this tradition, has to explain it. Matthew, on the other hand, while taking up this story for his community, which is largely made up of Jewish Christians, finds it unnecessary to explain this tradition, which is well known in his milieu. Luke, on the other hand, who is addressing Greek Christians for whom this dispute does not apply, ignores Mark's account altogether.

- b. Another example comes from the question of divorce (Mk 10:2-9 || Mt 19:6); note that Luke did not see fit to include in his Gospel this Jewish question of the divorce bill, which did not apply in his Greek milieu. In Mark's version, after answering the Pharisees, Jesus returns home, where the disciples question him again on the subject. The symbolism of the house is that of the Church and the way it has interpreted Jesus' words and applied them to everyday life. We have drawn a parallel between the rules in force in Mark's community, those of Matthew (who twice presents the rules of his milieu), and those of Luke.

Mark 10	Matthew 19	Matthew 5	Luke 16
11 And he <u>said</u> to them, " <u>Whoever releases (from a marriage bond) his woman and marries another, he is an adulterer</u> to her;	9 Then, I <u>say</u> to you that " <u>Whoever releases (from a marriage bond) his woman</u> , apart from sexual immorality, <u>and marries another, he is an adulterer</u>	5: 32a Then, I, I say to you that <u>everyone releasing (from a marriage bond) his woman</u> , except for on account for sexual immorality, makes her to be <u>adulteress</u> ,	16: 18a <u>Everyone releasing (from a marriage bond) his woman</u> and <u>marrying a</u> different commits <u>adultery</u> .
		<u>and whoever shall marry her having been released (from a marriage bond)</u> , he is an <u>adulterer</u> .	16: 18b <u>and who marrying her having been released (from a marriage bond)</u> by a husband commits <u>adultery</u> .

12 And if she, having released (from a marriage bond) her husband, marries another, she is an adulteress.			
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There are two traditions on divorce rules, Mark's and the Q Document's (in blue).

- Marcan tradition and the Q Document agree that if a man repudiates his wife and marries another, he is committing adultery.
- The Q Document adds that a man who marries a divorced woman is also committing adultery.
- Matthew mentions an exception to the indissolubility of marriage, a case of *porneia*. In Greek, *porneia* means any sexual derangement, debauchery, fornication, prostitution - in short, any illicit sexual relationship according to the standards of the time, including homosexuality and incest (what if it's the man who's guilty of *porneia*?). And so we must assume that for Matthew a man can repudiate his wife if she is guilty of sexual immorality. Another peculiarity of Matthew is the expression "made her an adulteress" (5: 32a). What does this mean? A woman without a husband means she's without a breadwinner, and so must look for another man who will support and protect her; in this sense divorce forces her to commit adultery.
- Then, Mark is the only one to present the case of a woman who repudiates her husband (v. 12).

What does that mean? The Marcan tradition reflects the Roman community, where both men and women could initiate divorce. The Q Document reflects a Jewish environment in which only the man could initiate divorce; this environment extends adultery to the person who marries a divorced woman. Matthew, who adopts both the Marcan tradition and the Q Document, adds in both cases the exception of *porneia*, no doubt an exception in his community. As for Luke, he simply repeats the Q Document without modifying it; the question does not seem of great interest to him, and he inserts it in a series of references to various laws.

- c. Another typical example of modifications for sociological reasons comes from the story of the man who asked Jesus about how to inherit eternal life. Let's consider Jesus' answer according to the evangelists.

Mark 10	Matthew 19	Luke 18
19 <u>You know the commandments</u>	17b If you want to enter into the life, keep <u>the commandments</u> . » 18 He says to him: "Which?"	20a <u>You know the commandments:</u>

What do we see? Mark and Luke assume that these are the Ten Commandments; in fact, Jesus lists six. But Matthew knows that in the Jewish world, the commandments were not limited to the decalogue given at Sinai, but included a set of laws which, according to the Talmud, amounted to 613 commandments: 248 positive commandments ("do") and 365 negative commandments ("do not"). Hence Matthew's question: "Which ones?"

- d. Another interesting example of an evangelist modifying a story to suit the interests of his community is when a scribe questions Jesus.

Mark 12	Matthew 22	Luke 10
28b <u>Et</u> having approached <u>one</u> of the scribes, <u>having heard</u> them discussing, having seen that he answered well to them, he <u>questioned him</u> : " <u>Which commandment</u> is first of all?"	34 Them, the Pharisees, <u>having heard</u> that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered together on the same [place], 35 and <u>one</u> of them, [<u>a lawyer</u>] <u>questioned him, testing him</u> : 36 " <u>Teacher, which commandment</u> great in the law?"	25 <u>And</u> behold <u>a</u> certain <u>lawyer</u> stood up, <u>testing him</u> , saying: <u>Teacher</u> , what having done will I inherit eternal life?"

A question about the most important commandment is typically Jewish. What do we find in Luke? This typically Jewish question is of no interest to his community in Greece. So he replaces it with a more universal question about inheriting eternal life.

- e. The comparison between Matthew and Luke on their version of the lost sheep is very revealing of their community perspective.

Matthew	Luke
12 What to you it seems? If it should happen to a certain man hundred sheep and might go astray one out of them, will he not leave the ninety-nine upon the mountains and having gone he seeks the (one) being astray?	4 What man of you, having a hundred sheep and having lost out of them one, will he not leave behind the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes upon the having been lost until he might find it?
[13a] And if he should find it,	5 And having found he lays upon the shoulder of him rejoicing,
	6 and having come into the house he calls together the friends and the neighbors saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the sheep of me the having been lost.
13b-14 amen, I say to you that he rejoices upon it more than upon the ninety-nine the not having gone astray. Thus it is not a will in front of the father of you the (one) in heavens , that should perish one of the little (ones) these.	7 I say to you that thus joy in the heaven will be upon one sinner changing his mind than upon ninety-nine righteous who does not have a need of a change of mind.

We can see that the sheep's situation is not the same in the two versions.

- In Matthew, the sheep goes astray (*planaō*), while in Luke it is lost (*apollymi*). Going astray has a specific meaning in Matthew, which we observe when the disciples ask about the end of the world and Jesus replies: "Take heed lest you be led astray (*planaō*). For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray (*planaō*)" (24:4-5)... False prophets will arise in great numbers and will lead many astray (*planaō*)" (24: 11; see also 24: 24). Matthew thus places us in the Christian community, where some have gone astray, giving in to false prophets and various gurus. These are the "little ones", for whom Matthew's Jesus has this to say: avoid scandalizing any of these little ones who believe in me (18:6). Since Matthew's community seems to have been made up of many Jewish Christians, we can assume that the scandal came from certain tenors who attacked certain Jewish practices or distanced themselves from them, troubling some of the more conservative and weaker members, even driving them away from the community (an interesting example is the consumption of butcher's meat that had previously been offered to idols: see 1 Cor. 8:1-13).
- In Luke, the sheep is lost (*apollymi*). Unlike Matthew, there is no sense of a community perspective, i.e. no Christian who has drifted away from the community. A typical example of the lost is Zacchaeus, whose story ends as follows: For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost (*to apolōlos*) (Lk 19:10). The perspective is much more universal, i.e. all those not yet reached by Jesus' word and not yet committed to a new orientation in life.

5. Stories without parallel

When a story has no parallel in the other evangelists, the parallel analysis allows us to ask the question: where does this story come from? From a source specific to the evangelist? Or did he compose it himself?

- For example, consider the finale of the story about walking on the waters.

Mark 6	Matthew 14	John 6	Luc
50b <u>Then, him, immediately he spoke with them, and says to them: Take courage! Me, I am! Don't be afraid!</u>	27 <u>Then, immediately he spoke [the Jesus] to them saying, Take courage! Me, I am! Don't be afraid!</u>	20 <u>Then, him, he says to them: Me, I am! Don't be afraid!</u>	
	28 Then, having answered him, Peter said, Lord, if it is		

	you, command me to come towards you on the waters.		
	29 Then, him, he said, Come. And having descended from the boat, Peter walked upon the waters and came to Jesus.		
	30 Then, then looking at the [mighty] wind, and he feared, and began to be submerged in the sea, and cried, saying, "Lord, save me		
	31 Then, immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?		
51-52 <u>and he went up towards them into the boat and the wind ceased,</u> and extremely [beyond measure] they were stunned, for they had not understood about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.	32-33 <u>and</u> them, having <u>gone up into the boat, the wind ceased.</u> Then those in the boat prostrated [before] him, saying, "Truly, of God, son, you are	21 So, they were willing to receive him <u>into the boat</u> and immediately it came to pass the boat upon the land to which they were going.	

As we can see, Matthew sets himself apart from the other evangelists by inserting at the end of this scene the narrative around Peter asking Jesus to give him the order to accompany him on the water. This is a purely theological addition because of the role Peter plays in his gospel (see in particular 16:18; 17:24; 18:21), since Peter was an important member of the Antioch community from which his gospel is probably written. For Matthew, faith is a fundamental dimension of the Christian life, and more than any other, his leader must demonstrate it. It's worth noting that Luke, who has a copy of Mark's Gospel with the story of the walk on the waters, has seen fit to omit it altogether. Why did he do this? Did he find the scene too fantastical for his usually skeptical Greek audience? Or was the scene's catechetical value less than obvious? Perhaps both.

- b. Take, for example, the disciples' reaction to Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane.

Mark 14	Matthew 26	Luke 22
50 And <u>having left him,</u> they <u>fled all.</u>	56 Then <u>all</u> the disciples, <u>having left him, fled.</u>	

What does Mark say, followed by Matthew: the disciples abandon Jesus and flee. What does Luke say, even though he has Mark's Gospel in front of him? Nothing. He completely omits this passage. Why does he do this? He wants to preserve a positive image of the disciples, as he does throughout his Gospel.

- c. Matthew's account of Judas' suicide is interesting because it has no Gospel parallel.

Matthew 27

3 Then Judas, the one who gave him over, having seen that he [Jesus] was judged against, having changed with remorse, returned the thirty silver pieces to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I sinned in having given over innocent blood". But they said, "What is that to us? You must see to it". 5 And having cast the silver pieces into the sanctuary, he departed; and having gone away, he hanged himself. 6 But having taken the silver pieces, the chief priests said, "It is not permitted to

Acts 1

(Excerpt from Peter's speech in Acts 1 :15-26, place between Jesus' ascension forty days after the resurrection, and before the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost [fifty days after Passover] ; Peter addresses the men of the community whom he calls brothers) : 16 "It was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David concerning Judas who was the leader of those who took Jesus, 17 because he was numbered among us and was

throw these into the treasury since it is the price for blood". 7 Having taken a decision, they bought with them the potter's field for a burial ground of strangers. 8 Therefore that field has been called "Field of Blood" to this day. 9 Then there was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet saying, "And they took the thirty silver pieces, the prices of the one priced, whom the sons of Israel priced. 10 And they gave them for the potter's field, according to what the Lord directed me".

allotted a share of this ministry. (18 Accordingly this man acquired acreage with the wages of his wickedness; and laid prostrate, he burst open in the middle, and all his entrails poured out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with the results that his acreage was called in their language Hakeldamach, that is 'Acreage of Blood'.) 20 It is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let his habitation become a desert, and let there be no dweller in it' and 'Let another take his superintendency'". (There follows in 1:21-26 the account of the choice of Matthias "to take the place of the service and apostolate from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place [v.25].)

Let's make a few observations.

- Matthew is the only one to offer us this scene, which the other three Gospels ignore: Judas is said to have been overcome with remorse, brought the 30 pieces of silver back to the temple, threw them into the sanctuary and then went off to hang himself, while the chief priests took the money to buy a field for the burial of foreigners.
- Matthew inserts this scene somewhat awkwardly, since the chief priests, who have just condemned Jesus and taken him to Pilate, are at the same time in the temple talking with Judas.
- One might think that Matthew had created this story from scratch, were it not for the testimony of the Acts of the Apostles, a completely independent story with a number of common elements: Judas' death takes place around the same time as Jesus', his death was violent, the purchase of land is associated with this death, this land bears the name "of the Blood", and there are references to the fact that the story seems ancient.
- We have to conclude that Matthew may have had an ancient account on hand that spoke in general terms of Judas's violent death. But in keeping with his habit of introducing glosses, he has amplified this account by adding a number of details taken from Scripture, such as the thirty pieces of silver, the throwing of them into the sanctuary, the suicide by hanging, the clarification that this was a field that had been acquired and the reference to the potter. Although we can guess at many of his references to Scripture, we have to admit that he uses it quite freely to support his religious vision (see a summary of [R.E. Brown's analysis](#)).

6. Parallels within the same gospel

Sometimes, parallel analysis applies to stories within the same gospel.

- a. A first example is given in Luke's infancy narrative.

	John the Baptist		Jesus
1:5-25	Annunciation to Zacharias by the angel Gabriel	1:26-28	Annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel
1:41-45	Elizabeth proclaims her blessing and beatitude over Mary	1:46-56	Mary proclaims her thanksgiving
1:57-58	Birth of Jean-Baptiste and a visit from the neighbors	2:1-20	Birth of Jesus and visit from the shepherds
1:59-63	Circumcision on the eighth day	2:21-28	Circumcision on the eighth day and presentation at the temple
1:64-79	Zechariah's prophecy	2:29-38	Prophecies of Simeon and Anna

1:80	The hidden life of John the Baptist	2:39-52	Jesus' hidden life in Nazareth and anticipation of his service of the word at the age of twelve
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What can we observe?

- Luke clearly wanted to draw a parallel picture of Jesus and John the Baptist.
- Both mothers are portrayed as women of faith: Elizabeth recognizes Mary as the mother of her Lord, and Mary welcomes the angel's words.
- Both pictures follow a similar structure:
 - i. Announcement of the birth of a child by the angel Gabriel when it seems impossible, and determination of their name by God
 - ii. Song of bliss from both mothers
 - iii. Mention of the birth of two boys, and a visit from the locals
 - iv. Mention of the circumcision of the two boys on the 8th day
 - v. Prophecy about the boys' future
 - vi. A summary of the boys' childhood
- Both "miraculous" births presented as God's work
- Both births are presented as a source of joy for all.
- Both births provide an opportunity to praise God for visiting his people
- Both narratives are replete with excerpts from the Old Testament

So, by bringing Jesus and John the Baptist together through the parallel of their birth, Luke is showing the greatness of John the Baptist: he too is part of God's plan.

b. Another example comes from two parables in Luke.

Luke 11:5-8: the cheeky friend	Luke 18:5-8: the persevering widow
5 And he said towards them, someone out of you will have a friend and will go towards him at midnight and would say to him, "Friend, lend me three breads, 6 since a friend of me arrive out of road towards me and I do not have what I will set before him." 7 And this one from within having answered, would say,	2 saying, a certain judge was in a certain city. The God he (was) not fearing and man not respecting. 3 Then, a widow there was in that city, and she was coming towards him saying, Avenge me from the adversary of me. 4 And he did not want upon a time. Then after these things he said in himself,
"do not <u>present to me trouble</u> (Greek : <i>parechein moi kopon</i>); already the door has been shut and the children of me with me into the bed are; I am not able, having risen up, to give you." 8 I say to you, <u>if even</u> (Greek: <i>ei kai</i>) he will not give to him, having risen up, because to be friend of him, <u>yet because</u> (Greek: <i>dia ge</i>) of the shamelessness of him, having woken up, he will give to him as much as he needs.	<u>if even</u> (Greek: <i>ei kai</i>) the God I do not fear nor a man I respect, 5 yet because (Greek: <i>dia ge</i>) the (fact) to <u>present to me trouble</u> (Greek: <i>parechein moi kopon</i>) this widow, I will avenge her in order that into end, coming, she would not wear me out.

- Apart from the three identical expressions, both parables involve a similar reality: a person wants to obtain something under difficult circumstances (in the middle of the night from someone asleep with his family in the first case, from a judge who has no interest in justice in the second). Both parables are used by Jesus to establish an a fortiori argument: if human beings eventually succumb to demand, how much more will God answer believers in prayer.
- Luke's twin parables probably come from the same source. Both support the importance of praying, and praying boldly, without growing weary. The evangelist inserted these two parables at two different points in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. In the first case (11:5-8), the emphasis is on prayer as listening to the word of God (scene of Martha and Mary which precedes, beatitude "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and observe it!" which follows), in the second case (18:1-8) the emphasis is on prayer as support

in waiting for the return of the Son of Man and in reorienting one's life to prepare for the coming Reign of God.

- c. As John's Gospel has few parallels with the Synoptics, the analysis of parallels will often be done by comparing pericopes within the same Gospel, or with its letters that reflect the same theology. In the following texts, we have highlighted in red the words of Jn 3 that are also found in Jn 12 and 1 Jn 4.

John 3: 16-18	John 12: 46-48	1 Jean 4: 9
16 For God (theos) so loved (agapao) the world (kosmos) that he gave his Son (huios) only begotten (monogenes), so that everyone who believes (pisteuo) in him shall not perish, but have life (zoe) eternal.	46 I, the light, have come into the world (kosmos), so that whoever believes (pisteuo) in me shall not abide in darkness.	In this was manifested the love (agape) of God (theos) for us: God has sent (apostello) his Son (huios) only begotten (monogenes) in the world (kosmos) so that we live (zao) through him.
17 For God (theos) did not send (apostello) his Son (huios) into the world (kosmos) to judge (krino) the world (kosmos), but that the world (kosmos) may be saved (sozo) by him.	47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge (krino) him, for I have not come to judge (krino) the world (kosmos), but to save (sozo) the world.	
18 Who believes (pisteuo) in him is not judged (krino); who does not believe (pisteuo) is already judged (krino), because he has not believed (pisteuo) in the Name of the Son (huios) one (monogenes) of God (theos).	48 Whoever rejects me and does not receive not my words has his judge (krino): the word which I have spoken, it is that which will judge him (krino) at the last day;	

Let's limit our observations here to the parallel between Jn 3:16 and 1 Jn 4:9, where we find the same idea: God showed his love for the world by sending his only son so that we might find life through him.

- In both cases, Jesus' existence is presented as an action of God's love, an action described as a sending in the first case, a giving in the second. And the purpose of this action is the same: to give life to mankind.
- The greatest difference is that our Jn 3:16 specifies the condition for accessing this life, i.e. believing, and what is at stake in faith, i.e. not perishing. It's clear that the author of the letter was familiar with our passage from John's gospel, for he uses some of its vocabulary and expressions: God's action motivated by love (*agapaō*), centered on sending the only son (*huios*) (*monogenēs*), an infrequent expression found nowhere else except in this letter and in John's gospel, whose purpose is to give life (*zōē*), or rather that we live through him (*di' autou*).

7. John's parallels with the other Gospels

Parallels between John and the other Gospels are rare, but they do exist. This means that certain traditions have circulated under different variations.

- a. One example is this passage concerning the testimony of John the Baptist. The underlined words refer to those in Mark, which are also found in the other Gospels. The words in blue are specific to Matthew and Luke and probably come from the Q Document. Words in red are John's own words, found in one or other of the gospels, but not in Mark or the Q Document. So we have three traditions for the same event.

Mark 1	Matthew 3	Luke 3	John 1
7-8 And he was preaching <u>saying, he comes the mightier than</u>	11 <u>I</u> indeed <u>I baptize you in water</u> concerning repentance.	16 He did answer <u>saying</u> to all <u>the John, I</u> indeed, with <u>water I baptize you</u> ;	26-27 He answered them <u>the John saying, I I baptize in water</u> , in the

me after me, of whom I am not sufficient having stooped down to untie the strap of the sandals of him. I I baptized you with water, then him he will baptize you in holy spirit.

Then, the (one) after me coming mightier than me he is, of whom I am not sufficient to carry the sandals. Him, he will baptize you in holy spirit and fire.

then, he comes the mightier than me, of whom I am not sufficient to untie the strap of the sandals of him. Him, he will baptize you in holy spirit and fire,

midst of you has stood whom you, you do not know, the (one) after me coming, of whom I, I am not worthy that I should untie of him the strap of the sandal.

The great similarity in all the versions can be observed. As we have no copy of the Q Document, it is difficult to make an exact comparison between Mark's tradition and that of the Q Document, which must have been quite similar. But if a word is found in both John and Matthew or Luke, it's likely that it was part of the Q Document, and that one of the evangelists preferred it to Mark's; this is the case of "in" the water in Matthew and John, while Luke preferred "with" the water in Mark. On the other hand, it's easy to establish that the expressions "holy spirit" and "fire" come from the Q Document.

- b. Another example is provide by the miraculous catch Luke 5: 1-11 || Jn 21: 1-19.

Identical words or parts of words are underlined. Verses in square brackets are out of sequence for comparison purposes. We have eliminated Jn 21:9-18 from the comparison, as these verses present a different sequence to the narrative.

Luke 5	John 21
1 Then, it came to pass in the to press him the crowd and to hear to word of God, and him, he was has been standing by the lake of Gennesaret,	1 After these things he made visible himself again the Jesus to the disciples over the sea of Tiberias. Then, he made visible (himself) in this way.
2-4a and he saw two <u>boats</u> have been standing by the lake. Then, the <u>fishermen</u> from them, having stepped out, were washing the nets. Then, having <u>got up into</u> one of <u>the boats</u> , which was to <u>Simon</u> , he asked him from the land to put off a little. Then, having sat down, out of <u>the boat</u> he was teaching the crowds. Then, as he stopped speaking,	2-3a They were together <u>Simon</u> Peter and Thomas, the (one) being said Didymus and Nathanel the (one) from Cana of the Galilee and those of <u>Zebedee</u> and others out of the disciples of him two. He says to them <u>Simon</u> Peter, I am going to <u>fish</u> . They say to him, we are coming also, us, with you. They came out and <u>got up into the boat</u>
[5 And having answered Simon, he said, Master, through whole <u>night</u> having toiled we have taken <u>nothing</u> . Then, upon the word of you, I will let down the nets.]	3b, and in that <u>night</u> they caught <u>nothing</u> .
	4 Then morning already happened he stood Jesus into the shore; however they didn't know the disciples that Jesus it is.
	5 So says to them the Jesus, children, are you not having any fish? They answered to him, no.
[4b he said towards Simon, put off into the (water) depth and let down the <u>nets</u> of you for a catch.]	6a Then, him, he said to them, cast into the right side of the boat the <u>net</u> , and you will find.
6 And this having done, they enclosed a great <u>multitude</u> of <u>fishes</u> . Then, were breaking the nets of them.	6b So they cast and they were no longer able to draw it from the <u>multitude</u> of the <u>fish</u> .
[8-10a Then, having seen <u>Simon</u> Peter fell at the knees of Jesus saying, Get out from me, for a sinful man I am, <u>Lord</u> . For amazement surrounded him and those with him upon the catch of the fish which they have taken with them. Then, likewise James and John sons of <u>Zebedee</u> who were partners with <u>Simon</u> .]	7 So says the disciples that one whom was loving the Jesus to Peter, the <u>Lord</u> it is. So <u>Simon</u> Peter having heard the <u>Lord</u> it is, the outer tunic he wrapped around, for he was naked, and he cast himself into the sea.
7 And they beckoned to the partners in the other <u>boat</u> to take part with them, having come, and they <u>came</u> and they filled both the <u>boats</u> to the point to sink, them	8 Then, the other disciples in the little <u>boat came</u> , for they were not far from the land, but as long as from two hundred cubits. Drawing the net of the fish.

10b And he <u>said</u> towards the <u>Simon</u> the Jesus, Do not fear, from the now men you will be catching. 11 And having brought down the boats upon the land, having left all, they <u>followed</u> him.	19 Then, this he said signifying of what sort of death he will glorify the God. And this having said, he says to him, <u>Follow</u> me.
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Let's recall Luke's account. This is the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. After getting into Peter's boat on the shores of Lake Tiberias and preaching to the crowds, he asks him to go out into deep water and spread the nets, even though he has toiled all night without catching anything. The fish caught are so numerous that Peter asks the other fishermen in their boat for help, and then gets so scared that he asks Jesus to move away because he's a sinner.

In contrast, John's story takes place after the resurrection, after Jesus has already appeared twice to his disciples in Jerusalem, and the gospel has come to a conclusion. In chapter 21, Jesus is on the shore of Lake Tiberias, while his disciples are fishing without recognizing him. After he invites the fishermen to cast their nets to the right, they catch a multitude of fish; Peter, with the help of the beloved disciple, recognizes him, jumps into the water to join him, and finally, when they are all with Jesus, he mysteriously gives them bread and fish that were already cooking on the wood fire.

But behind these differences, which can be explained by particular editorial and theological contexts, we can clearly discern the same story.

1. A group of fishermen led by Peter had spent the night without catching anything.
2. With supernatural knowledge, Jesus invites them to spread their nets again
3. Peter and his associates obey, and haul in a huge quantity of fish
4. The impact on the net, which could break, is mentioned.
5. Peter is the only one to react strongly
6. The narrator calls Jesus by name, while Peter alone says: "Lord".
7. The other disciples remain silent
8. Jesus invites Peter to follow him
9. The symbolism of the story is clear, and is linked to missionary action: without Jesus, Peter and the other disciples can achieve nothing, but with Jesus they will be very successful.
10. Luke's and John's narratives contain many words in common: go up [in the boat], follow, net, fish, boat, night, sons of Zebedee.
11. When Peter reacts to the miraculous catch, he is called Simon Peter. This is all the more remarkable as it is the only mention in Luke.

In short, we have two different versions of the same story. (For a detailed analysis, see [Meier on Luke 5: 1-11](#) || [In 21: 1-19](#))

- c. The story of the sellers driven from the temple, which is found in all four Gospels, offers us another example of parallels with John's Gospel.

Mark 11	Matthieu 21	Luc 19	Jean 2
15b-16 <u>And having entered into the temple, he began to cast out those selling and those buying in the temple, and the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling the doves he overturned.</u> And he was not letting that anyone would carry an object through the temple.	12 <u>And he entered Jesus into the temple and he cast out all those selling and buying in the temple and the tables of the money changers he overturned, and the seats of those selling the doves.</u>	45 <u>And having entered into the temple, he began to cast out those selling,</u>	14-16a <u>And he found in the temple those selling oxen and sheep and doves and the money-brokers sitting, and having made a whip of cords, he cast out all from the temple, both the sheep and the oxen and the money changers; he poured out the coins and the tables he turned, and to those selling the doves</u>
17 <u>And he was teaching and was saying to them : "Has it not been written that the house of me a house of prayer will be called for all the nations? But, you, you have made it a den of robbers.</u>	13 <u>And he says to them: "It has been written : 'the house of me a house of prayer will be called', but you, you make it a den of robbers."</u>	20 <u>saying to them: "It has been written: 'And will be the house of me a house of prayer', but you, you made it a den of robbers."</u>	16b <u>he said : "Take away these things from here, do not make the house of the father of me a house of trade.</u>

What do these parallels reveal?

- Mark's account is in two parts: first an action, followed by an explanation. Note that the day before, Jesus had entered the temple, "and looking around (him), as the hour was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve" Mk 11:11. Then, the next day, leaving Bethany on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus puts the curse on an unfruitful fig tree, the symbol of the temple, which has not borne the expected fruit. Here we have a typical Marcan sandwich or chiasm structure: one narrative begins, interrupted by another, then the end of the initial narrative. Thus, Jesus goes to the temple to observe the situation, the story of the fig tree symbolizes the barrenness of the temple, and the sellers driven out of the temple follows Jesus' initial observation and is justified by what is revealed through the fig tree.

What are the money-changers doing in the temple? The Roman and Greek currency displayed pagan figures, which was not allowed to pay the temple tax (the equivalent of two drachmas or denarii, which corresponded to two days' wages for a day laborer), and so people were needed to exchange this currency for the legal tender of Tyre, which bore no pagan figures. And, of course, the money-changers made a small profit.

Finally, Mark's account puts two Scripture quotations from the Greek Septuagint into Jesus' mouth, first Isa 56:7 ("the house of me a house of prayer it shall be called for all nations"), then Jer 7:11 ("a den of robbers").

- Matthew repeats Mark's account almost in its entirety, except on two points. He completely ignores Mark's phrase: "and he left no one to carry objects here and there through the temple". Why was this? It's not clear that he understood the exact meaning of this sentence. First of all, what was being carried? Why would Jesus have objected to this action? It's likely that this action was not related to buying or selling. The only other activity in the temple open to the public was the burnt offering. It's also likely that the transport we're talking about was for the wood used to cook the animals offered. If this is Matthew's understanding, he may have found the image of Jesus opposing the temple burnt offerings shocking.

Similarly, in the reference to the house of prayer, Matthew eliminated the phrase "for all nations" from Mark. Why? We can guess that Matthew, even if he recognized here the quotation from Isaiah and his universalist vision of the future where Israel would become a light for the whole world, knew very well that Jesus' death represented a failure of this vision.

- Luke is the most concise: he simply mentions those who sell, without any details. There are two obvious reasons for this. Firstly, the detail of the temple trade was probably of little interest to his Greek audience. But more importantly, Luke has immense respect for the temple: his gospel begins in the temple with the revelation to Zechariah, and ends in the temple where the disciples continually stand in praise of God; for him, there is a beautiful continuity between the Old and New Covenants. He was probably uncomfortable with Mark's account of the vendors being driven out of the temple, especially after recounting in his infancy story that Joseph and Mary offered two young doves for Jesus' presentation in the temple, doves they had most likely bought in the temple.
- John's account comes from a source independent of Mark. The only points it has in common with Mark are that Jesus chases away the sellers, particularly the dove sellers, and the money-changers, and overturns the tables. But John's account lacks the quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah. On the other hand, we have more details on what was being sold: not only doves, but also oxen and sheep for burnt offerings. This is all the more plausible given that, if someone wanted to make an animal offering for a burnt offering, he didn't leave home with the animal; he simply had to buy it at the temple. So we understand much more clearly that Jesus is opposed to the whole ritual of temple sacrifices. And there's more violence in John's account than in Mark's: not only does Jesus overturn the tables, but he uses a whip and spills the coins, and drives out not only the people, but all the animals too.

We've colored in red two words from John that are also found in Matthew. It's probably accidental that the two evangelists used the same verb in the same tense.

Despite the differences between the Synoptics and John, we are looking at the same source, which over time has given rise to two different traditions. However, Mark places this scene at the end of Jesus' ministry, during his last week in Jerusalem before dying, while John places it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Which chronology is more plausible? Biblical scholar R.E. Brown opts for Mark's chronology for the following reasons:

- i. The affront to temple worship is so significant that it would have forced the religious authorities to intervene swiftly, and this is what happens in Mark.
- ii. To intervene with such force, Jesus must have had the status of a prophet and a certain number of followers (this scene follows the triumphal entry into Jerusalem).

- iii. John is said to have moved this story to the beginning of his Gospel to give full prominence to the raising of Lazarus, making it the motive for Jesus' death, rather than an affront to temple worship.

8. The use of the Old Testament in parallels

When analyzing parallels, it is sometimes necessary to turn to the Old Testament, which often inspired certain passages in the Gospels.

- a. This is the case with the story of the widow of Nain, inspired by the book of Kings. We have highlighted in green words that are similar between Luke's text and the Greek Septuagint.

Luke 7	1 Kings 17 (LXX : 3 Kings)
11-12 And it happened in the next (day) he went into a town called Nain and were going with him the disciples of him and a crowd great. Then as he drew near to the gate of the town, and behold was also carried out a having died only begotten son of the mother of him and her she was a widow . And a crowd of the town , large, was with her.	[10 And he arose and went into Sarepta, and came to the gate of the town: and behold , a widow -woman was there gathering sticks; and Eliu cried after her, and said to her, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.] 17 And it happened afterward, that the son of the woman the mistress of the house was sick; and his sickness was very severe, until there was no spirit left in him.
13 And having seen her the Lord was move with compassion upon her and said to her, Do not weep.	18 And she said to Eliu, What have I to do with thee, O man of God? hast thou came in towards me to bring my sins to remembrance, and to put to death my son ?
14 And having come near, he touched the coffin. Then those bearing (it) stood (still), and he said to the young man, to you I say, wake up.	19 And Eliu said to the woman, Give me thy son . And he took him out of her bosom, and took him up to the chamber in which he himself lodged, and laid him on the bed.
	20 And Eliu cried aloud, and said, Alas, O Lord, the witness of the widow with whom I sojourn, thou hast wrought evil for her in putting to death her son .
	21 And he breathed on the little boy thrice, and called on the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, let, I pray thee, the soul of this little boy return to him.
	22 And it happened this way, and the little boy cried out,
15 And sat up the dead (man) and he began to speak, and he gave him back to the mother of him .	23 and he brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him back to the mother of him ; and Eliu said, See, thy son lives.
16-17 Then fear seized all and they were glorifying the God saying that a great prophet woke up among us and that the God has visited the people of him. And came out this word in whole of Judea concerning him and all the surrounding region.	24 And the woman said to Eliu, Behold, I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.

When we compare the scene in Nain with the one in the book of Kings, we note elements of similarity. A prophet meets a widow for the first time at the city gate. This widow has a son, whom Luke specifies to be unique, but who also appears to be unique from the text of the Book of Kings. This son dies, and it is the prophet who brings him back to life. The son of the widow of Zarephath is risen up by his loud cry, and that of

the widow of Nain by his word. A striking point is that Luke uses the same words as in the book of Kings: and he gave him back to his mother; so the focus is on the mother, not the son. It's pretty clear, then, that Luke had this story in mind when he wrote the scene at Nain, and when he writes that a great prophet has arisen among us, he's affirming that a new Elijah is among us. On the other hand, we can't overlook a few differences: the widow of Zarephath blames Elijah for her son's death, and Elijah responds, whereas the widow of Nain asks for nothing, and everything comes from Jesus' initiative; Elijah has to pray to God and lie on the child to bring him back to life, Jesus only needs a word.

- b. On several occasions, the evangelists quote passages from the Old Testament. It's worth comparing these quotations with the Old Testament passage to determine whether they are referring to the Septuagint or another version, or how they have modified their source. Take, for example, Jesus' inaugural discourse in the synagogue of Nazareth, where Luke puts into Jesus' mouth a passage from Isa 61:1-2. This quotation is divided into seven parts, and we have paralleled the Greek version of the Septuagint with the Hebrew version of the Massoretic text. As the order of the statements in Luke's text and the Septuagint is not identical, we have colored the sentences that diverge so that they can be found in the parallel columns.

Luke 4: 18-19	Isaiah 61: 1-2 Greek Text (LXX)	Isaiah 61: 1-2 Hebrew Text (MT)
1. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me	1. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me	1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because Yahweh has anointed me
2. He sent me to bring good news to the poor	2. He sent me to bring good news to the poor	2. To bring a joyful message to the poor,
3. To proclaim liberation to captives	3. To heal those having been broken in the heart	3. To heal broken hearts
4. And to the blind the return of sight	4. To proclaim liberation to captives	4. To proclaim freedom to the captives
5. To send the broken ones out for liberation	5. And to the blind the return of sight	5. Those who have been tied the opening [of the eyes]
6. To proclaim an acceptable year of the Lord	6. To proclaim a year acceptable to Yahweh	6. To proclaim a year acceptable to Yahweh

What do we see?

- It's clear that Luke is referring to the Greek text of the Septuagint, almost word for word.
- However, he makes a slight change in their order. He relegates to fifth place the reference to the broken people mentioned in third place in the Septuagint, thus promoting to 3rd and 4th place what was 4th and 5th place in the Septuagint. Why did this happen? Did Luke's version of the Septuagint differ from ours?
- Four groups are identified: the poor, the captives (of war), the blind (i.e. beggars) and the broken. Who are these broken people? Luke seems to be referring here to Isa 58:6: "I have not chosen such a fast, says the Lord; but break all your ties with injustice; untie the knots of violent contracts; set at liberty those who have been broken; tear up every unjust obligation." So, broken people are people caught in the net of social injustice, prisoners of unjust contracts; they therefore refer to people exploited, oppressed, crushed by life.
- What do we offer these people? Let's start with the poor. They are offered good news. What good news is that? Not that they will become rich. Luke's Gospel simply says that the kingdom of God is for them, i.e., that they are great before God, contrary to social perception. What are the captives offered? Release from captivity. This is easy to understand for captives of war: this release allowed them to return home and put an end to their slavery. For the blind, we offer a return to sight. For the broken, Luke's text offers liberation: if we refer to how Isa 58:6 defined them, it means that they are freed from unjust contracts, and thus the end of their situation as exploited and oppressed. Here, Luke makes a change from the Septuagint text, and hence from the Hebrew Bible. Both the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible speak of "healing" broken hearts. What does this mean? When Ezekiel (21:12) speaks, for example, of "broken hearts" (And if they say to you: Why do you groan? Answer: Because of the news, because the enemy is coming; and every heart will be broken, and every hand will be angry; and every flesh, every breath will fail), he refers to those who lose heart in the face of adversity; we are then in a moral context. Luke, however, has opted for a social context in which an individual suffers injustice. Finally, Luke's Jesus offers everyone a jubilee or sabbatical year, called "acceptable of the Lord", i.e. a year of God's favor. Among the Jews, slaves were to be freed every seven years, and people were to be freed of their debts every 50 years.

- You may have noticed that the 5th affirmation of the Septuagint (“And to the blind the return of sight”) does not repeat the 5th affirmation of the Hebrew text (“Those who have been tied the opening [of their eyes]”). Why not? First of all, the Hebrew text refers to people in prison (those who have been tied). And what is offered is curiously formulated: the opening. We have here in the Hebrew text a term (*peqah-qôah*) unique in the whole Bible, which designates opening, in particular of the eyes. Now, we’re faced with the situation where someone, having been in a dark dungeon for a long time, is finally freed and sees the light for the first time; this is a release from prison. It’s impossible to know which Hebrew text the translator of the Septuagint had in front of him. If it was indeed this text, he probably thought that, since we had spoken earlier of “captives”, speaking of “prisoners” would become redundant. So he kept the image of regaining the light, but replaced “prisoner” with “blind”.

c. A third example comes from Mt 1:23, which quotes Isa 7:14.

Matthew 1	Isaiah 7: Septuagint (LXX)	Isaiah 7: Hebrew (MT)
23 Behold the virgin (<i>parthenos</i>) will be with child (<i>en gastri hexei</i>) and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel	14 Behold the virgin (<i>parthenos</i>) will conceive (<i>en gastri lēpsetai</i>), and will give birth to a son, and you (sing.) will call his name Emmanuel	14 Behold the young girl (<i>‘almâ</i>) is (will be) with child and will give birth to a son, and she will call his name Emmanuel

Here are a few comments on each version.

- i. The Hebrew Massoretic text
 - Isaiah’s oracle is addressed to the wicked king Akhaz (circa 735 to 715 BC) to give a sign to the skeptical monarch of a contemporary event
 - The child to be born is not the Messiah, but a Davidic prince who will deliver Judah from its enemies.
 - The word *almâ* designates a young girl who has reached puberty and is therefore available for marriage. There is in itself no connotation of virginity, except by the very fact that she is not married.
 - The presence of the definite article “the” girl makes it likely that Isaiah is referring to someone whose identity was known to the prophet or King Akhaz.
 - In short, the sign given by the prophet points to the imminent birth of a naturally conceived child of Davidic lineage who will illustrate God’s providential care for his people.
- ii. The Septuagint text
 - The translator of the Septuagint (circa 140 BC) opted for *parthenos* to translate the Hebrew *‘almâ*, whereas this Greek word was usually used to translate the Hebrew *betûlâ*, which means virgin. Other Greek translations (Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion) after the Septuagint opted instead for *neanis* (maiden) to translate the Hebrew *‘almâ*.
 - With the term *parthenos*, the Septuagint translator simply intended to say that a woman, who is for the moment a virgin, will naturally conceive a child the day she is united to a man. At most, he meant that it would be a first-born child.
- iii. Matthew’s text
 - Matthew uses *hexei en gastri* (lit.: will have in the belly), rather than the Septuagint’s *lēpsetai en gastri* (lit.: will receive in the belly). Why is this? Matthew intends to follow the standard structure of birth narratives for great people used by the Septuagint, where it says: “have in the belly”, not: “receive in the belly”.
 - Matthew writes “they will call him” rather than the Septuagint’s “you will call him”. Why is this? The simplest explanation is that Matthew deliberately altered the Septuagint text of Isaiah to fit his narrative: quoting the prophet Isaiah, he could not put in his mouth “you (Joseph) will call him by the name of Emmanuel”. By having “they will call him”, Matthew changes the subject to a much wider audience, the “they” possibly referring to the people he spoke of in v. 21, the people whose sins Jesus will save, a people that seems to include the Gentiles; if, then, it is this great universal people who will call him “Emmanuel”, then Jesus may truly be the son of Abraham, the one in whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed.
 - Matthew gives us the meaning of the name “Emmanuel”, which the Septuagint does not. It is an addition on his part to the quotation from Isaiah. For the meaning of the name must have escaped those who did not know Hebrew. This meaning is suggested to him by Isaiah 8:10, a passage that follows 8:8, where the mention of Emmanuel appears for the second time: “whatever your words may be, they will not be fulfilled; for the Lord is with us”. It is this interpretation that interests him more than the name Emmanuel itself: it allows him to support Jesus’ divine filiation in addition to his Davidic one, and it allows him to include the last words of his gospel: “And behold, I am with you

always, to the end of the age". And this inclusion reflects Matthew's vision of the messiah, which he sees as a presence that makes itself felt eschatologically, i.e. the final, once-and-for-all manifestation of God's presence.

- Matthew begins his Gospel with a mathematically structured genealogy, consisting of three sets of fourteen generations. He sees in all this a plan meticulously prepared by God to produce a "son of David", then the voice of the prophet Isaiah who not only announces a "son of David", but also an Emmanuel, a "God with us". For Matthew, to accuse Jesus of illegitimacy was downright slanderous.

In short, Matthew makes many references to the OT in his Gospel, but he often modifies and adapts it to support his theology.

As we have seen throughout this presentation, the analysis of parallels is an important step in biblical analysis, as it allows us to grasp the particular emphases of an evangelist. It is at this point that his theology and pastoral perspective begin to emerge, while highlighting the features of his prose.

5. Lexicographical analysis

- A. [Grammar and statistical data](#)
 - 1. [Part of speech](#)
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- B. [Meaning of the word in the passage analysed](#)
 - 1. [The different meanings of the word](#)
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- C. [The origin of the word and its place in the evangelist's vocabulary](#)
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 - 3. [Matthew and Luke's use of the Q Document](#)
 - 4. [Mark's editorial work](#)
 - 5. [John](#)

The evangelist uses Greek words. It is therefore important for the analyst to have a minimum knowledge of ancient Greek. For he will have to define the meaning of the words or expressions used by the evangelist. This involves grasping the syntax, the meaning of the word in general and the particular meaning in a pericope, and even pinpointing the source of the word or expression if necessary. There are a number of tools available for this task.

For syntactic analysis, a good online tool is one that presents an interlinear analysis either by chapter: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/1.htm>, or by verse: <https://biblehub.com/text/matthew/1-1.htm>. In book format, there is always the [Analysis Philologica Novi Testamenti Graeci](#), from Max Zerwick s.j.

For definitions of Greek words, there are a number of tools available. You can use the following [lexicon](#): after selecting a Greek word, the web page of the selected word will provide you a link to access the Perseus Dictionary. I make extensive use of [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament](#) by Grimms Wilkes and translated into English by Joseph Henry Thayer, which can be found in PDF format on this site: <http://www.christianresearcher.com/uploads/1/6/2/9/16298120/01greekenglishlexicongrimsthayer.pdf>. In book format, I use [A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament](#) by Barclay M. Newman, that is part of the [The Greek New Testament](#) as an appendix. For the Septuagint, you can download in PDF format the [A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint](#) from this site : <https://archive.org/details/a-greek-english-lexicon-of-the-septuagint-revised-edition>.

To locate occurrences of Greek words, I offer you a tool I created myself, but which is mainly focused on occurrences of the word in the Johannine Gospels-Acts-Letters, even if on occasion I also present occurrences in the Greek translation of the Septuagint: https://www.mystereetvie.com/lexique0_e.html; this lexicon has the advantage of presenting statistics on occurrences of the word in the Gospels-Acts. If you wish to obtain all the occurrences of New Testament words throughout the entire Greek Bible, there is this site: <https://lexicon.katabiblon.com/index.php?diacritics=on>. In book format, use [A Concordance of the Greek Testament](#), Moulton (W.F.) and Geden (A.S.).

Finally, for grammar, there's the classic work by F. Blass and A. Debrunner that can be downloaded from this site: [A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature](#).

It should be noted that the <https://biblehub.com/> offers a wealth of resources for both the Old and New Testaments.

In this chapter on lexicographical analysis, we will focus on three aspects of the analysis: grammar and statistical data, the meaning of the word or expression, and its origin and place in the evangelist's vocabulary.

A. Grammar and statistical data

1. Part of speech

The first question in the grammatical analysis of a word is: what role does this word play in the sentence, or what is its part of speech? In Greek, a word can be:

- A verb
- A noun
- An article
- Adjective
- Pronoun
- Number
- Adverb
- A preposition
- A conjunction
- An interjection
- A particle

a. The verb

Before a verb, there are four questions to ask: which voice, which mode, which tense, which number.

i. Voices: in Greek, there are 4 voices. There are:

- Active: What the subject does
- Passive: What the subject undergoes
- Middle: It corresponds to the reflexive verb and the action is carried out in the interest of the subject.
- Deponent: The verb has no active, but its meaning corresponds to the average voice.

ii. Mood: we distinguish between personal and impersonal moods

a. Personal moods:

- Indicative: factual mood
- Imperative: order mood
- Subjunctive: mood of potential or possible
- Optative: wish mood, very rare in the NT

b. Impersonal moods

- Infinitive
- Participle

iii. Tense: in the NT, we encounter six tenses that can be grouped as follows

a. Primary tense:

- Present: an action in progress
- Future: an action that will take place
- Perfect: an action that took place

b. Secondary tense:

- Imperfect: an action that began in the past and continues today
- Pluperfect: an action that took place before the moment in the past being recounted
- Aorist: an action that took place in the past and is now over; a point in time

iv. Number: singular and plural

The grammatical analysis of the verb often gives us the first indications of the evangelist's style. For example, Mark likes to tell a story in the present tense (the historical present), whereas Matthew and Luke prefer the aorist. For example, Mark writes: "And he says to them (present tense): 'Let us go elsewhere...'" (Mk 1:38), whereas Luke, when he takes up this passage, writes: "But he said to them (aorist tense): 'To the other cities also I must...'"

In the NT, the participle is widely used, and so we encounter it regularly. When preceded by the article, it becomes a noun and can play all the roles of a noun. For example, it plays the role of direct object complement in the sentence: "eat the [things] being presented to you" (Lk 10:8); or the role of subject in

the sentence: “the handing over me drew near” (Mt 26:46). Frequent examples include: Mt 2, 15: *to rhēthen* (the having been said = the word); Lk 8:56: *to gegonos* (the having happened = the event), Lk 9:7: *ta ginomena* (the things happening = the events).

A special case is that of the genitive absolute. The sentence is a participial proposition with an independent meaning and plays the role of a conjunctive subordinate proposition, i.e. one that gives us the context of the scene. For example, Mk 5:18: “And he (gen.) going up (gen.) into the boat, the man...” = “As he was getting into the boat, the man...”; Mt 27:17: “They (gen.) having therefore been gathered (gen.), Pilate...” = “As they had been gathered, Pilate...”.

In Greek, the verb sometimes contains its subject, e.g. Mt 26:46a: *egeiresthe, agōmen* = get up, let's go, or Mt 2:9: *eporeuthēsan* = they went. But very often, the subject is a noun or a substantival participle. In such cases, it's easy to find the subject, especially if it's in the same sentence, but sometimes it takes a bit of analysis to spot it. This is often the case with Mark, who assumes that the reader knows who the subject of the action is, in particular Jesus. For example, in Mk 1:16-45, the name “Jesus” only appears in v. 17 and v. 25. Yet throughout these 30 verses, it is Jesus who is the subject of all the actions. But Mark simply repeats “he”.

b. Noun, adjective, article, pronoun and number

These five word categories can be broken down by case, gender and number.

The case expresses the role a word plays in the sentence. There are five, including the four main ones, plus the vocative.

- i. Nominative: designates the subject of the action: Who? and its attribute.
- ii. The vocative: expresses the direct call out or invocation of a person (or thing); it is relatively rare. Mt 15:28: “Then answering, Jesus said to her, ‘O Woman (vocative), great is your faith’.
- iii. The accusative: designates the object of the action: What or Who? It expresses movement in space and time. Note that in Greek we can have a double accusative with certain verbs such as to question, to ask, to teach, to dress. For example, Mk 4:2: “He taught them (accusative) many things (accusative) in parables”.
- iv. The genitive: designates the origin: From what or from who? It's a verb or noun complement. It's the most frequently used in the NT. Under the influence of Hebrew, the genitive of quality is found in NT Greek, often replacing the adjective. For example, Lk 16:8: “And the master praised the steward of injustice (genitive)”, instead of: “And the master praised the unjust steward”.
- v. The dative: it designates attribution: to whom or to what? Its essential function is to mark attribution, possession and, by extension, interest. It also marks the place where we are, the precise point in time where we are. For example, Mt 8:15: “she arose and began to serve him (dative)”.

c. Adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and particles

These five word categories are invariable, and therefore indeclinable.

- i. Adverbs. As their name suggests, adverbs modify a verb, but also an adjective or another adverb. They can be grouped into three main categories: adverbs of place (where are you? Where are you going? Where do you come from?) For example, Mt 4:6: “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down (*kato*)”; the adverb of time (When? Since when? How many times?) For example Mt 25:38: “When (*pote*) did we see you a stranger...”; the adverb of quantity or manner (How? How many times?) For example, Mk 7:37: “He has done all things well (*kalos*)...”.

Finally, there are affirmative and negative adverbs. For affirmations, we usually use the adverb *nai* (e.g. Mt 15:27: “Yes (*nai*), Lord! she said”), but we sometimes use the particle *ge* to give an affirmative twist to the sentence (e.g. Mt 7:20: “So indeed (*ge*), it is by their fruits that you will recognize them”). For negations, we use the adverb *ou* or *ouch* (not) with verbs in the indicative, and *mē* with other modes, and its derivatives, namely:

- *Ouketi* : no longer (Mt 19:6 “So they are no longer (*ouketi*) two, but one flesh”).
- *Ouchi* : absolutely not, a reinforced negation (Lk 1:60 : “But, answering, his mother said: “No (*ouchi*), he be called John”)
- *Oude*: neither...nor, not even (Mt 22:46 “No one was able to answer him, not even (*oude*) a word”),
- *Ou mē*: very strong negation: by no means (Lk 6:37: “condemn not, and you will not (*ou mē*) be condemned”)

- ii. Prepositions are used to link ideas in a sentence, or more precisely to mark the relationship between the complement and the word being completed. There are three categories of prepositions: prepositions that command a single case for complement, prepositions that command two possible cases, and prepositions that command three possible cases.

		Accusative (expresses the move towards)	Genitif (the move from)	Dative (lack of motion)
With a single case	<i>ana</i>	from bottom to top		
	<i>eis</i>	to, into		
	<i>anti</i>		instead of, in place of	
	<i>apo</i>		from, away from, since	
	<i>ek (ex)</i>		from, out from	
	<i>pro</i>		before, in front of	
	<i>en</i>			in, to
	<i>syn</i>			with
With two cases	<i>dia</i>	because of, on account of	through, during	
	<i>kata</i>	along, according	down, against	
	<i>meta</i>	after (time)	among, with	
	<i>peri</i>	around, near	about, concerning	
	<i>hyper</i>	over, beyond	on, in favor of	
	<i>hypo</i>	under	by	
With three cases	<i>epi</i>	on, unto, during, for	upon, at the time when	in addition to, upon
	<i>para</i>	by, along, more than, contrary to	beside, from	by, near
	<i>pros</i>	towards, to, in order to	on the side of, for the sake of	at, near, by

Here is a list of adverbs or phrases used as prepositions and which always require the genitive:

- In front of, opposite of: *emprosthen, enōpion, enantion, katenōpion*
- Before, against: *enanti, apenanti, katenanti*
- Behind: *opisō, opisthen*
- Over, above: *epanō, hyperanō*
- Under, beneath: *hypokatō*
- Between: *metaxy, ana meson, en mesō, dia mesou, ek mesou*
- Until: *achri, achris, mechri, mechris, heōs*
- Separately, without: *chōris, aneu, plēn*
- Because of, for this cause: *heneka, heneken, heineken, charin*

- iii. Conjunctions are used to join two words, two groups of words, two propositions or two sentences. They fall into two categories:

- Coordinating conjunctions that closely link two members of a sentence, such as *kai* (and, also), *oute... oute; mēte... mēte* (neither... nor, not even), *ē* (or), *ē kai* (or also), *ē... ē* (either... or), *alla* (but), *gar* (for), *dio* (therefore), *dioti* (because), *oun* (therefore), *homōs* (nevertheless)
- Subordinating conjunctions that introduce a subordinate proposition, such as *hote* (that, because), *hoti* (that), *hotan* (whenever), *epan* (when), *ean* (if), *ei* (if), *hina* (in order that), *hōste* (so that), *heōs* (until), *epei* (since), *epeidē* (since), *epeidēper* (since), *kathōs* (as), *mēpote* (less that), *katha* (as).

- iv. Interjections are words that can be used in isolation to express, in the form of an exclamation or a question, a sudden strong emotion, or to restart communication. There are four in the Gospels:

- *idou* (before), for example: Mt 3:17: "And behold (*idou*) a voice from heaven said, ..."
 - *ouai* (woe), for example: Mt 11:21: "Woe (*ouai*) to you, Chorazin! Woe (*ouai*) to you, Bethsaida!",
 - *ide* (see, look), for example: Mk 2:24: "The Pharisees said to him, "Look (*ide*), why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?"",
 - *ō* (O!), for example: Mk 9:19: "He answered them, 'O (*ō*) Generation faithless, how much longer must I be among you?"". Other gospel interjections include: *ea* (Ha!) in Lk 4:34, *oua* (aha!) in Mk 15:29.
- v. Particles are small words that sometimes act on whole clauses, becoming conjunctions or complements of the conjunction they help to underline or qualify, and sometimes underline the meaning of a word, becoming adverbs. The particle is one of the hallmarks of the Greek language. In particular, they give intonation to dialogue. In the Gospels, we find eleven particles, which can be ordered by importance:
- *de* (then, but) which appears almost every other verse, and is used to link the different moments of a story, which the evangelists use in a way almost equivalent to *kai* (and). The particle is used as a coordinating conjunction.
 - *te* (and, both, also), found especially in the Acts of the Apostles, but absent from Mark. The particle is used as a coordinating conjunction.
 - *men* (indeed, on the one hand), found in all four Gospels, but especially in the Acts of the Apostles. The particle is used as a coordinating conjunction.
 - *hōsper* (as), found mainly in Matthew, but absent in Mark. The particle is sometimes used as a subordinating conjunction, sometimes as an adverb of manner.
 - *ge* (indeed, moreover), found only in Matthew and Luke. It is never found on its own, but is used to underline the preceding word to emphasize its meaning. It gives a positive turn to the sentence without explicitly saying: yes.
 - *mēti* (is it not?) is an interrogative particle expecting a negative response. It appears in all four Gospels.
 - *mentoi* (yet) is found only in the Gospel of John and the epistles of James and Jude in the NT, and in the book of Proverbs in the Septuagint. The particle is used as a coordinating conjunction.
 - *dē* (but, now) is very infrequent throughout the NT. The particle is used as a coordinating conjunction.
 - *pote* (once, at one time) is found only in Luke and John's Gospels. The particle is used as an adverb of time.
 - *ēper* (than) found only in John throughout the NT. The particle is used as a comparative conjunction.
 - *toinyn* (then) found only in Luke's Gospels. The particle is used as a coordinating conjunction.

2. Literal meaning

When performing a lexicographical analysis of the Greek text, it is important to make the translation as literal as possible. This is true for every word. Why is this so? It's a way of feeling the spirit of the Greek language. Because very often there is no exact equivalence between two languages, and our Bibles use different words to translate the same Greek word in different contexts.

Let's take the example of the verb *apolyō*, which literally means "to untie". The Greek world uses this word in a variety of circumstances.

- It is first used when someone is released from prison, because having been chained there, they are freed from their chains. Our Bibles translate this verb, for example, as "to release" or "to let go".
- This verb is also used in the context of a crowd that is gathered together, and so ties are formed between people, and untying these ties means asking the crowd to leave. Our Bibles, for example, translate this verb as "to send away" the crowd.
- The verb is also used in the context of matrimonial ties, so to untie means to put an end to them. Our Bibles translate this verb, for example, as "repudiate" or "dismiss" or "divorce".
- Finally, this verb is used in reference to an offense against someone, an offense that is seen as a debt such as that which binds two individuals by contract, and thus to untie the debtor means to tear up the contract, and thus to remit the debt. Let's add that in ancient times, an infirmity or illness was seen as having its source in sin, and so forgiving the debt of sin meant severing the ties with the forces of evil. Our Bibles, for example, translate this verb as "to forgive" or "to deliver".

For a list of occurrences of this word in the New Testament, see the [lexicon on apolyō](#).

A special situation concerns verbs with the same root, but distinguished by different prefixes. Take, for example, the verb *bainō*, which literally means “to walk”. But in the Greek language, different prepositions have been added as prefixes to modify its meaning. For example:

- Adding *ana* (from bottom to top): *anabainō*, literally: to walk upwards, and so: to go up
- Adding *apo* (from, away from): *apobainō*, literally: to walk away from, and so: to go out
- Adding *dia* (through): *diabainō*, literally: to walk through, and so: to cross over
- Adding *en* (in): *embainō*, literally: to walk in [a boat], and so: to embark
- Adding *epi* (unto): *epibainō*, literally: to walk unto [a donkey, a city], and so: to go upon
- Adding *kata* (a move downward): *katabainō*, literally: to walk downward, and so: to descend
- Adding *meta* (after, away): *metabainō*, literally: to walk after or away, and so: to move after or away (from a place)
- Adding *para* (beside): *parabainō*, literally: to walk beside, and so: to turn aside
- Adding *pro* (before): *probainō*, literally: to walk before, and so: to advance
- Adding *pros* (towards) and *ana* (a move up): *prosanabainō*, literally: to walk up towards, and so: to move up
- Adding *syn* (with) and *kata* (a move downward): *synkatabainō*, literally: to walk together downward, and so: to come down with
- Adding *syn* (with): *symbainō*, literally: to walk with, and so: to happen
- Adding *syn* (with) and *ana* (a move up): *synanabainō*, literally: to walk upward with, and so: to come up with

Finding the literal meaning of words allows us to better grasp the author's thought. Take the example of Lk 10:2b, translated as follows by the NRSV: “therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out (*ekballō*) laborers into his harvest”. Now, what is the literal meaning of the verb *ekballō*, formed from the preposition *ek* (out of), and the verb *ballō* (to throw)? It means: to drive out or expel. How can the NRSV translate this verb as: to send out? In the previous verse, Luke mentions the disciples being sent on mission, using the appropriate verb: *apostellō* (to send). Why is it different in v. 2? By retaining the literal meaning, we can grasp the nuances of the author's thought. Indeed, the verb *ekballō* can take on several nuances around the basic meaning “to throw out”, like that of to extract. For example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke writes: “The next day, he extracted (*ekballō*) two denarii [from his purse] and gave them to the innkeeper” (10:35a). And above all we have this passage from John 10:4: “When he has extracted (*ekballō*) [from the pen] those that are his, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.” All this sheds light on our v. 2. The prayer addressed to the Lord asks that certain Christians be taken out of the comfort of the community's enclosure to go on mission: in a way, it's a request to be expelled from the community for a good cause. By translating *ekballō* as “to send”, as many Bibles do, and not as “to extract”, we miss the nuance of the author's thought.

Another example of the benefit of literal translation is the word *misthos*, which literally means: what is due. It is translated as either salary or reward. Unfortunately, while we can make a correlation between “salary” and what is due, we cannot do so with “reward”, as the latter is optional and cannot be considered as due. So when we read a phrase like Mt 5:12 (“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward (*misthos*) will be great in heaven”), we get the impression that we're referring to a “gift” from God, whereas the phrase literally refers to “what is due”.

An interesting example of a literal translation concerns the verb *metanoēō*, formed from the preposition *meta* (among, alongside, after) and the verb *noēō* (to perceive with the mind, to understand), and so literally means: to perceive alongside or otherwise, hence to change one's mind. Our Bibles usually translate this verb as “to repent”, or “to convert”. The problem with “repent” is that the word is synonymous with regret and emphasizes the emotional aspect, whereas *metanoēō* expresses above all a new understanding of things. Similarly, the verb “to convert” is too closely associated with religious conversion and emphasizes a change, without specifying at what level. The verb *metanoēō* describes a change in the perception of things: there are things we didn't see before that we now see. Of course, a change in perception leads to a change in behavior, but that represents a different stage.

3. Statistical data

a. General comments

What do we mean by “statistical data”? It's the calculation of the number of occurrences of a word or expression in reference to a particular book or author. Why are these statistics important? They enable us to identify an author's favorite words, which sheds light on both his style and his theology. That's why I've created [a lexicon](#) focusing on the Gospels, with the number of occurrences of different words in each book.

	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts	1Jn	2Jn	3Jn	Total
Greek words total	18,346	11,304	19,482	15,635	18,450	2,141	245	219	85,822
Different Greek words	1,680	1,346	2,034	1,020	2,012	233	96	108	3,756

A first glance at these statistics reveals that Luke's Gospel is by far the most voluminous, not only in terms of the total number of words in his Gospel (19,482 words), but also in terms of the number of different Greek terms used to write his Gospel (2,034 words). He thus offers us a very rich vocabulary, which presupposes that Greek was his mother tongue.

In contrast, the Gospel according to John was written with the minimum number of words: when we look at the total number of words (15,635), it's a little more voluminous than Mark's Gospel, but it uses only 1,020 different Greek terms; these are often the same terms that he repeats throughout his Gospel, like someone whose Greek language was learned late, but who knows how to use his vocabulary up its limits to express a thought of great spiritual depth.

When we now consider the number of different terms in relation to the total number of words in the gospel, we get this:

Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts
18,346	11,304	19,482	15,635	18,450
1,680	1,346	2,034	1,019	2,011
9.2%	11.9%	10.4%	6.5%	10.9%

Mark takes the cake among evangelists with 11.9%. What does this mean? This shows a good deal of variety in his knowledge of Greek words, leading biblical scholars to consider him a Greek speaker. By contrast, John manages to write a text of 15,635 words with only 6.5% different words.

Finally, a word about the letters of John, which I have included in my statistics on the Gospels. Why should I do this? The kinship between the Gospel of John and the three so-called letters of John is so great that, if they are not by the same author, they must be attributed to the same school of thought. Think of all the vocabulary around knowledge, like *ginōskō* (to know), *oida* (to know), *theaomai* (to contemplate), *phaneroō* (to reveal), *parrēsia* (visibility), *logos* (word), *phōs* (light), *alētheia* (truth), *alēthēs* (true), *alēthōs* (truly), *alēthinos* (true), and its opposite as *skotia* (darkness), *pseudos* (liar), *pseustēs* (liar), *typhloō* (to blind), *amartanō* (to wander, to sin), *amartia* (sin). Similarly, couples appear like *agapaō* (to love) / *miseō* (to hate), *kalōs* (well) / *kakos* (evil). It has the atmosphere of a big trial, with words like *martyreō* (to testify), *martyria* (testimony), *homologeō* (to profess), *diabolos* (adversary). Love is associated with works using words like *ergon* (work), *entolē* (precept), *ergazomai* (to work). John's frequent words also appear in the letters, such as *zaō* (to live), *zōē* (life), *aiōnios* (eternal), *kosmos* (world). God is named *patēr* (father), and Jesus either *christos* (christ), or *monogenēs* (only begotten), and to express the relationship with the believer the verb *menō* (to stay) is used extensively. So, in a lexicographical analysis of the Gospels, John's letters must be taken into account.

b. Specific comments

Having made the grammatical observations of the word we are analyzing and determined its literal meaning, it is then a good idea to examine the frequency of this word in the evangelists, and in particular in the evangelist we are studying. This allows us to anticipate the importance the gospel attaches to this word. Let's give some examples according to the evangelists.

i. Mark

In Mark, the *grammateus* (scribes) figure prominently among Jesus' opponents and recur regularly throughout his gospel, and the statistics are as follows: Mt = 22; Mk = 21; Lk = 14; Jn = 1; Acts = 4; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. One might have the impression that the word is more frequent in Matthew, and that Luke's Gospel is not far behind, but if we remove from Matthew and Luke the occurrences that are simply a copy of Mark, we end up with Mt = 13; Mk = 21; Lk = 4; Jn = 1; Acts = 4. Thus, Mark is the evangelist who gives the greatest prominence to the scribes, those learned Bible specialists, and it is to them, with the participation of the high priests, that he attributes Jesus' death.

Another example of what statistical data allows concerns Mark's style, such as the adverb *euthys* (immediately): Mt = 5; Mk = 41; Lk = 1; Jn = 3; Acts = 1; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. And since Matthew's five occurrences come from a copy of Mark, more accurate statistics give: Mt = 0; Mk = 41; Lk = 1; Jn = 3; Acts = 1. Mark seems to use "immediately" to link together certain scenes or actions, or to express the force of Jesus' action, word and call.

Statistical data tells us that Mark is very fond of the verb *eperōtaō* (to question): Mt = 8; Mk = 25; Lk = 17; Jn = 2; Acts = 2; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. And if we remove from Matthew and Luke the occurrences that are simply a copy of Mark, we obtain these new data: Mt = 5; Mk = 25; Lk = 10; Jn = 2; Acts = 2. In Mark, Jesus questions the people and his disciples a lot, and the disciples question him a lot; the evangelist has a preference for this form of dialogue.

ii. Matthew

A good example of Matthew's style is his recurrent use of the verb *proserchomai* (to draw near): Mt = 51; Mk = 5; Lk = 10; Jn = 1; Acts = 10; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. Most of the time, it's people, especially his disciples, who approach Jesus. This is his way of introducing a story and bringing all the attention to the main characters in the scene, turning the spotlight on the dialogue or action that follows.

Another example of a verb that is particular to him, especially if we consider the Synoptics, is the verb *proskyneō* (to prostrate oneself): Mt = 13; Mk = 2; Lk = 3; Jn = 11; Acts = 4; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. The number of occurrences in John is misleading, for of the 11 occurrences of the verb, nine appear in the dialogue with the Samaritan woman, where the place of worship is discussed. In Matthew, of the 13 occurrences, 10 are addressed to Jesus, and these ten occurrences are specific to him. This is Matthew's expression of a "high theology", in which Jesus is presented in his divine guise, the one we know through faith in the resurrection.

A revealing clue from the author of the Gospel according to Matthew is the use of the word *ouranos* (heaven): Mt = 82; Mk = 18; Lk = 35; Jn = 18; Acts = 26; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. For of the 82 occurrences of the word in Matthew, 37 are euphemisms for God. This way of speaking is very specific to the Jewish world, where God is not referred to by name, but rather by dwelling place. All this reflects Matthew's Judaism.

iii. Luke (the gospel and the Acts of the Apostle)

There are countless statistical examples of Luke's particularities. Let's limit ourselves to a few, starting with a feature of his literary style, that of regularly accompanying the subject of the verb, especially in the parables, with the indefinite pronoun *tis* (a certain [man]): Mt = 21; Mk = 34; Lk = 81; Jn = 54; Acts = 112; 1Jn = 6; 2Jn = 1; 3Jn = 1. This is a way of designating any individual, and one that it matters little to identify.

But most of the time, his own emphases reflect his theology. For example, his frequent use of *kyrios* (lord): Mt = 80; Mk = 18; Lk = 104; Jn = 52; Acts = 107; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. And it's noteworthy that for him, the term designates Jesus first of all (40 times in the Gospels, 53 times in Acts), then God (37 times in the Gospels, 45 times in Acts); it's the Jesus of faith that he considers. Likewise, his theology gives pride of place to the Holy Spirit: Mt = 5; Mk = 4; Lk = 14; Jn = 4; Acts = 42; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0.

The statistical data also reveal his vision of the Christian life. For this presupposes a conversion presented as the action of turning around, *hypostréphō*, a verb he is the only one to use in the Gospels: Mt = 0; Mk = 0; Lk = 21; Jn = 0; Acts = 11; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. Likewise, in the image of Jesus who walks for 10 chapters (from Lk 9:51 to 19:28), the Christian life takes the form of a long journey with the verb *poreuō* (to go, to walk): Mt = 29; Mk = 3; Lk = 52; Jn = 16; Acts = 37; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0.

Finally, let's mention that Luke presents us with a clearly gendered universe: for rather than using the generic term *anthropos* (man as generic human being), he very often opts for the gendered term *anēr* (male, husband): Mt = 8; Mk = 4; Lk = 27; Jn = 8; Acts = 100; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0; and it is Luke who most often features a *gynē* (woman) : Mt = 29; Mk = 17; Lk = 41; Jn = 22; Acts = 19; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0.

Let's conclude by pointing out that if we consider only the four Gospels, we find 646 words in Luke's Gospel that are totally absent from the other three Gospels. An echo of the singularity and richness of his vocabulary and style.

iv. John

Let's start with John's language. General statistics have already revealed that he uses the fewest number of different words. In fact, he makes very frequent use of the basic words of any language: the verb *echō* (to have) : Mt = 74; Mk = 70; Lk = 77; Jn = 87; Acts = 44; 1Jn = 28; 2Jn = 4; 3Jn = 2; the verb *eimi* (to be): Mt = 289; Mk = 191; Lk = 362; Jn = 445; Acts = 278; 1Jn = 99; 2Jn = 6; 3Jn = 2; the verb *erchomai* (to come) : Mt = 114; Mk = 85; Lk = 101; Jn = 157; Acts = 50; 1Jn = 4; 2Jn = 2; 3Jn = 2.

John's Gospel has the reputation of being the Gospel of love. And indeed, the statistical data remembers this claim, with the presence of the verb *agapaō* (to love) : Mt = 8; Mk = 5; Lk = 13; Jn = 37; Acts = 0; 1Jn = 28; 2Jn = 2; 3Jn = 1, and the verb *phileō* (to love) : Mt = 5; Mk = 1; Lk = 2; Jn = 13; Acts = 0; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. At the same time, this emphasis on love goes hand in hand with the instance on *pisteuō* (to believe): Mt = 11; Mk = 14; Lk = 9; Jn = 98; Acts = 37; 1Jn = 9; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0.

Finally, a particular element of John's theology is expressed by the verb *doxazō* (to glorify): Mt = 4; Mk = 1; Lk = 9; Jn = 23; Acts = 5; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. The verb "to glorify" means to reveal glory, in particular the glory of Jesus, which is already present in his ministry, a glory that is expressed through the signs he performs, which are both saving actions and the revelation of his identity as the only-begotten

Son; the summit of this glory is his elevation on the cross, the ultimate victory over evil and the revelation of this being that he shares with the Father. The words "glory" and "glorify" are intended to signify the revelation of Jesus' identity and that of his Father.

B. Meaning of the word in the passage analysed

How does one go about determining the meaning of a word? The first reflex is to consult a dictionary, such as [The Greek New Testament's Geek-English Dictionary of the Greek New Testament](#) of the American Bible Society. But there are many online tools, such as the [Wiki Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), or the [Grimm's Wilke's Clovis Novi Testamenti](#) or the [Bible lexicon from Study Light](#) or the [Bill Mounce Greek Dictionary](#) that gives you the Strong number which is the key to use [The Blue Letter Bible dictionary](#). But this is a general definition, not the specific one for the pericope under study. So, to understand the meaning of a word or expression, I propose to proceed in two stages: first, to understand all the meanings that the word can take on, and then, among these various meanings, to determine the one that is appropriate to the verse under study.

1. The different meanings of the word

a. The context of the Gospels-Acts

The first step is to consider all the occurrences of the word in the Gospels-Acts. This allows us to observe the different contexts in which the word has been used, and therefore the different meanings it takes on according to these contexts. These meanings can then be grouped into appropriate categories.

Let's take *gē* (earth) as an example. When we consider all occurrences of *gē* in the Gospels-Acts (Mt = 43; Mk = 19; Lk = 25; Jn = 13; Acts = 33; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0), they can be grouped into five categories according to their context.

- i. There is earth here below as opposed to heaven, and thus the world of men in its relationship to the world of God. Earth and heaven are the two components of the universe. For example:
 - Mt 11:25: "At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth (*gē*), because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants"
- ii. Earth refers to our planet, humanity's living environment, and could be replaced by "the world". For example:
 - Mt 12:42: "The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the world (*gē*) to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!"
- iii. Earth refers to a political territory, and could be replaced by land or country. For example:
 - Mt 2:21: "Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land (*gē*) of Israel."
- iv. Earth is the ground on which we walk, as opposed to being on water or in the air. For example:
 - Mt 10:29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground (*gē*) apart from your Father."
- v. Finally, the earth is humus, fertile soil that can be sown to grow fruit and vegetables. For example, we can
 - Mt 13:23: "But as for what was sown on good soil (*gē*), this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

We can signal these different meanings with colors, as I did in [my lexicon for the word gē](#).

After observing all the occurrences in the Gospels-Acts, it is sometimes fruitful to put them together in table form.

	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts
Earth vs heaven	15	3	6	3	6
Our universe or world	9	3	8	1	9
Soil for cultivation	4	7	4	1	0
Land, firm ground	6	6	6	7	7
Country, political territory	9	0	1	1	11
Total	43	19	25	13	33

A table like this allows us to make a number of observations, such as :

- Matthew uses the word “earth” the most in the earth-heaven pairing. This is an entirely Jewish perspective, in which cosmic reality is represented as follows: “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth” (Gn 1:1).
- Mark’s frequent reference to the soil to be cultivated is explained by his parables about the sower and the seed that springs up of its own accord.
- Luke (Gospel and Acts) has a preference for this global view of the universe represented by the word earth.
- In John, two scenes account for the majority of references to the mainland, the firm ground: the scene of the miraculous catch where the disciples leave the boat for the mainland, and the episode of the adulterous woman where Jesus writes on the ground.

b. The context of the entire New Testament

But sometimes the Gospels-Acts domain doesn’t provide all the information we want on a word, either because the number of occurrences is too limited, or because we suspect that the other books of the NT will provide even more relevant information.

Let’s take the example of *ergatēs* in Lk 10:2: “He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers (*ergatēs*) are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers (*ergatēs*) into his harvest”. What does *ergatēs* mean, translated as “laborer”? This word comes as a surprise, as we would have expected *theristēs* (reaper): there is a shortage of reapers, not workers. The Gospels-Acts are of little help (Mt = 6; Mk = 0; Lk = 3; Jn = 0; Acts = 1; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0), as the two occurrences in Luke and two of the occurrences in Matthew all come from the same passage in the Q Document. Moreover, three of Matthew’s occurrences come from the parable of the workers of the eleventh hour, and so *ergatēs* refers to salaried workers; this only thickens the incomprehension: why would Jesus refer to salaried workers?

But when we look at the whole of the NT, we can gain a lot more insight, especially from 1 Tim 5:17-18.

Elders who lead the Church well deserve double pay, especially those with the heavy responsibility of preaching and teaching. For the scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and, “The laborer (*ergatēs*) deserves to be paid.”

In early communities, preachers, catechists and missionaries were paid. In the second letter to Timothy, the latter is called “a laborer (*ergatēs*) who has nothing to be ashamed of, a faithful dispenser of the word of truth.” When Paul attacks missionaries who sabotage his teaching, he calls them “evil laborers (*ergatēs*)” (Phil 3:2). Note also that Paul had the right to be paid for his missionary work, but he gave it up.

Thus, Lk 10:2 makes symbolic use of the image of the harvest, which designates the newly baptized, and refers to the practice of the first communities of calling missionaries and pastors called to train the newly baptized “laborers”.

c. The context of the whole Bible

Sometimes we need to widen the scope of our analysis to the whole Bible when the Gospels or the New Testament don’t give us all the information we need.

Let’s take the example of the word *hypodēma* (shoe) in Lk 10:4: “Carry no purse, no bag, no shoes (*hypodēma*); and greet no one on the road”. In the NT, it occurs only in the Gospels-Acts: Mt = 2; Mk = 1; Lk = 4; Jn = 1; Acts = 2; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. So we need to extend the scope of our analysis to the whole of the Old Testament in its Greek version, called Septuagint. How to proceed?

The first step is to identify all occurrences of *hypodēma* in the Septuagint. My [lexicon on hypodēma](#) display them all. Otherwise, we can use the [Wiki Lexicon of the Greek New Testament with respect to the word hypodēma](#). Then, for all occurrences of the Greek term, we need to examine which Hebrew word the Septuagint translator translated as *hypodēma*. To do this requires a minimal knowledge of Hebrew, at least an ability to recognize the alphabet. For example, among the occurrences of the word *hypodēma*, there is Gn 14, 23. We then use the analysis tool <https://biblehub.com/text/matthew/1-1.htm>, and on the drop-down menu at the top left of the page, we choose: Genesis, then ch. 14, v. 23, which presents us with the Hebrew text of this verse and its English translation: we can then see the Hebrew word *na’al* which has been translated into English as “sandal” and, to the left of the line, the numbering of the term according to James Strong’s Concordance. The word *na’al* has been given the number 5275. Now it’s a matter of finding out the full definition of this word with the online tool: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5275/kjv/wlc/0-1/>. Once on this site’s page, simply enter the code “H5275” (H = Hebrew) under the title line “Word / Phrase / Strong’s Search” to obtain the page devoted to *na’al*. At the beginning of the page, all the meanings of the word (sandal, shoe) are presented, including its root in the verb *nā’al*, which means “to lock”, suggesting the idea of a sole locked around the foot; then follows the Brown-Driver-Briggs index of occurrences of the word, and finally, at the bottom of the page, the English translation of all occurrences according to the King James.

Of course, if you know the Hebrew word *na'al* in advance, you can use Solomon Mandelkern's concordance on paper format ([The Mandelkern Biblical Concordance](#). Lipsiae: Veit et Comp., 1896) to obtain all occurrences of the word in the Hebrew Bible.

When we compare the list of occurrences of *hypodēmata* and the list of occurrences of *na'al*, we see two almost identical lists. But there are two exceptions, two cases where a reference to *na'al* is not on the list of references to *hypodēma*. There is first Isa 20: 2 ("The Lord spoke to Isaiah, son of Amos, saying: Go, and take off the hair shirt from your loins; untie the sandals [gr. *sandalon*, Hebrew: *na'ālā*] of your feet, and do as I tell you; travel naked and barefoot." And there is Josh 9: 5 ("The side [*koilos*] of their shoes [*hypodēma*] as well as their sandals [*sandalon*] were worn and patched, their garments showed the cord, and the bread of their supply was dried up, moldy, eaten away." This last case is surprising, for the Hebrew text simply says, "they had old sandals (*na'ālā*), worn and sewn up, and they wore old, worn clothes; all the bread of their provisions was dry and in crumbs". Thus, the translator of the Septuagint felt the need to use two Greek words to translate *na'ālā*, first *hypodēma* with the attribute *koilos* (lit. hollow), as if the shoe had an "edge", like a boot, then *sandalon*. Thus, it would seem that one could wear either simple sandals or a slightly more "dressed" shoe which could cover the foot more. But this example seems an exceptional case, and in general the Hebrew always has the same word *na'ālā* for the shoe on the feet, and the Septuagint almost always translates by *hypodēma*, which our Bibles most often translate as "sandal".

What do we know about *hypodēma*? Several times the straps of this shoe are mentioned: John the Baptist says he is unworthy to untie the straps of Jesus' shoes (Mk 1: 7; Lk 3: 16; Jn 1: 27). Thus, when we speak of taking off one's shoes, one says "to untie the straps of one's shoe" (Isa 5: 27), or simply "to untie one's shoe" with the Greek verb *lyō* or *hypolyō* (Acts 7: 33; 13: 25; Ex 3: 5; Deut 25: 9.10; Jos 5: 15; Rt 4: 7.8.).

As one can imagine, the shoe, which was not worn while staying at home, was used for walking. Thus the Israelites walked in "sandals/shoes" for forty years in the wilderness, and thanks to God, their sandals did not wear out (Deut 29:4). On the other hand, the Gibeonites who went to meet Joshua and his people complain that "our clothes and shoes have worn out during our long journey" (Josh 9:13). When Isaiah evokes this period of the Exodus when the Israelites were able to cross the sea, in order to announce the return from exile in the present time, he says: LXX "The Lord will cause his arm to fall on the river, and he will strike the seven mouths of it, so that one will cross them with sandals" (Isa 11:15). And if during the celebration of the Passover, sandals were required ("You shall eat in this way: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat in haste: it is the Passover of the Lord", Ex 12:11), it is because it was necessary to leave quickly for the journey of the transhumance.

But beyond its utilitarian side, the shoe/sandal had a symbolic value. First of all, it symbolized what was of little value. The prophet Amos denounces those who exploit the poor and needy, and buy them with cheap gifts, like a pair of sandals (Amos 2:6; 8:6). And when one makes a plea of one's honesty, one claims that one has not even taken a pair of sandals, not even the strap of a pair of sandals (Gen 14:23; 1 Sam 12:3; Sir 46:19).

Since one takes possession of a territory by walking through it, the shoe becomes the symbol of taking possession of a thing and exercising one's rights. Thus, Ps 60:10: LXX "And Moab, the vessel of my hope; I will lay my sandal upon Idumea; the strangers are subject to me" (see also Ps 108:10). Thus, to express the fact that one was giving up a right of possession, one untied the shoe of one's right foot and handed it over to the person who became the purchaser. This is what is described in the book of Ruth: LXX "Now this rule has existed in Israel for a long time concerning redemptions, and markets: to confirm any word, the man untied his shoe and gave it to his relative, who took back his right of redemption. Such was the testimony in Israel" (4:7; see also 4:8). This practice is found in the administration of the levirate, so that when a relative did not want to marry the widow of his brother who had died without children, the relative had to untie his sandal from one of his feet to express the fact that he was not exercising his right of levirate, while the widow spat in his face (Deut 25:9); and the text of Deuteronomy concludes: "And the house of that man shall be called in Israel the house of the one who has untied his sandal" (25:10).

Shoes are therefore a symbol not only of possession, but also of authority and domination. In this perspective, we must understand this passage from Solomon's Psalm: "Foreign nations have come up to your altar and have trampled it with their shoes because of their pride" (2:2). They are also a symbol of dignity and nobility: "How beautiful are your feet in your sandals, daughter of a prince! The contours of your thighs are like necklaces, the work of an artist's hands" (Song 7:2). Conversely, walking barefoot was a symbol of loss of power and grief. When Job says: "The Lord makes the priests go barefoot; he overthrows the most stable authorities", he refers to the humiliation of the priests. To announce to Egypt its defeat and humiliation, God said this to Isaiah: "Go, untie the sackcloth from your loins and take off your sandals from your feet"; Isaiah did so, he walked naked and unshod (Isa 20:2). In the funeral ceremony, to express mourning, one walked barefoot. It is in this context that we must understand the word of God addressed to Ezekiel who, announcing his imminent death, asks that no funeral rites be performed: "You shall have a sigh of blood, a pain of loins; your hair on your head shall not be braided, and your sandals shall be on your feet; no lip shall comfort you, and you shall not eat the bread of men" (Ezek 24:17); since sandals were not worn at funerals, keeping one's sandals on was a way of not doing a funeral rite.

All this helps us to understand the scene at the burning bush when God tells Moses: "Do not come near here; take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Ex 3:5). Why ask to remove the sandals? The first answer comes from the affirmation that the land is sacred, and therefore from the need to separate the sacred from the profane, the sandals representing the profane, they who have traveled the roads and collected dust; removing the sandals is equivalent to the rite of ablution with water before prayer and religious gestures. But there is more. The sandals are a symbol of possession, power and authority. To remove them is to give up one's authority and submit to God's, to humble oneself out of respect for God.

d. Extend to other words in the same category

When performing a lexicographical analysis, you sometimes need to broaden your search to include words of the same category, in order to capture the nuances that the author gives them. A good example is *polis* (city). What is a city? By modern standards, a city is an agglomeration of at least 2,000 people, governed by a mayor and a municipal council. What was it like in ancient times, and more specifically in Palestine at the time of Jesus? The Gospels give us few clues.

Three different entities are named: the smallest being the farm (*agros*), followed by the village or burgh (*kōmē*), and finally the city (*polis*).

And wherever Jesus went, whether villages (*kōmē*), cities (*polis*) or farms (*agros*), they put the sick in the squares and begged him to let them touch even the fringe of his cloak, and all who touched him were saved (Mk 6:56).

While it's easy to distinguish the village from the farm, it's not so easy to distinguish the city or town from the village. For example, Luke, Matthew and John treat Bethsaida as a city, but Mark as a village.

Matthew 11: 20	Luke 9: 10	John 1: 44	Mark 8: 23
Then he began to reproach the <u>cities</u> (<i>polis</i>) (Chorazin, Bethsaida) in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent.	On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a <u>city</u> (<i>polis</i>) called Bethsaida.	Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the <u>city</u> (<i>polis</i>) of Andrew and Peter.	He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the <u>village</u> (<i>kōmē</i>) (Bethsaida); and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?"

The same observation can be made about Bethlehem, called a city by Luke 2:4, but a village by John 7:42.

We can guess that the number of inhabitants, without being more precise, was a criterion to distinguish a city from a village. But there is probably mainly the fact that a city was usually fortified to protect itself, and one entered by a door. This is how, in the Old Testament, for example, we speak of the "city gate": Gen 19: 1 (Sodom); Josh 2: 5 (Jericho); Josh 8: 29 (Ai); Judg 9: 35 (Sichem); Judg 16: 2 (Gaza); 2 Kings 23: 8 (Jerusalem); Jdt 8: 3 (Bethulia). In the Gospels, Luke mentions the gate of the city of Nain: "When he was near the gate of the city (of Nain), there was a dead man born, an only son whose mother was a widow; and there was with it a considerable crowd of the city" (7: 12). And we know that the city of Jerusalem was a fortified city.

Which cities were named by the evangelists? i.e. where a specific name is explicitly associated with the word *polis*. Everyone goes from their own list.

- For Matthew, there are Nazareth (2: 23), Jerusalem (4: 5; 5: 35; 21: 10; 26: 18; 27: 53), Chorazin and Bethsaida (11: 20),
- For Mark, there is Capernaum (1: 33), Jerusalem (11: 19; 14: 16)
- For John, there are Bethsaida (1: 44), Sychar (4: 5), Ephraim (11: 54), Jerusalem (19: 20)
- For Luke, there are Nazareth (1: 26; 2: 4.39), Bethlehem (2: 4), Capernaum (4: 31), Nain (7: 11), Bethsaida (9: 10), Jerusalem (19: 41; 22: 10; 23: 19), Arimathy (23: 51)

The only consensus among all is the city of Jerusalem. Luke has the longest list, but his knowledge of Palestine, where he has probably never set foot, is rather poor, and one can imagine that he could have projected his Greek universe on the geography of Palestine.

As for villages, they are referred to without naming them, with a few rare exceptions: Bethsaida (Mk 8: 23), Bethphage (Mk 11: 2), Emmaus (Lk 24: 13), Bethlehem (Jn 7: 42), Bethany (Jn 11: 1).

e. Le contexte du monde grec classique

Occasionally, certain words can be illuminated by exploring their origins and meanings in classical Greek culture. What tools are available for such an incursion into ancient Greece? The traditional tool of biblical scholars is the [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#) (TDNT), 10 vol. Gerhard Kittel et Gerhard Friedrich, ed., an English translation of the German work [Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament](#) (TWNT). But an abridged version is available online for download in PDF format: [TDNT, abridged in one volume](#). Online, you can also use the <https://lexicon.katabiblon.com/index.php?diacritics=on>. On the page listing the occurrences of the word you're looking for, you can click on the Greek word to access the Perseus dictionary, which lists all the classical Greek authors using this word and the meaning they give it.

Let's look at a few examples of how the classical Greek world shed light on certain words.

- i. Let's start with the Greek vocabulary of love. In Homer's *Odyssey* (late 8th century BC), the verb *agapaō* is used when Odysseus is told "Are you not content (*agapaō*) to eat with us...". From the expression "to be content with" develops the idea of: to welcome with affection, or to show affection. And when the word is used in connection with things, it has a meaning close to *phileō*, i.e. to desire a thing.

The noun *philos* expresses membership of a social group, without sentimental connotations. When the adjective *philos* is used with people, it means: loved, cherished, dear. For its part, the verb *phileō* means: to cherish, to love, to have friendship for.

In classical Greek, it's the verb *eraō* and the noun *erōs* (which gave rise to our adjective: erotic) that are used to express desire and amorous passion. However, no terms from the erotic vocabulary made it into the New Testament.

- ii. Then there's the word *christos* (anointed, Christ), which the Septuagint uses to translate the Hebrew *māšīaḥ* (messiah). In the classical Greek world, the term *christos* (anointed, coated) is known as early as the 5th century BC. It is an adjective derived from the verb *chriō* (to touch lightly, to graze). It is used in poetry to describe being "greased" either with oil in the case of a person emerging from the bath, with ambrosia in the case of a corpse, or with poison in the case of an arrow. In the OT, this is how the king is anointed at the inauguration of his reign. Thus, the messiah is the one who has been "greased" or "coated with oil", a way of signifying that he has been chosen by God to carry out his function.
- iii. Let's now consider the word *daimōn* (demon). In ancient Greece, *daimōn* appears alongside the word *theos* (God) to designate the divine power that influences human destiny for good or ill, from which derives the meaning of "hateful fate" or "good fortune" or "happiness" (see also Isa 65:11). The philosopher Plato considers these divinities to be mixed beings, situated in a space between men and gods. As for daimonion, the term is the diminutive of *daimōn*, and so Plato considers it a divine but inferior being. According to the root of the word, *daimōn* designates that which disturbs and tears, and would have an animistic origin to describe the positive or negative powers that influence the course of human life. But in the hierarchy of otherworldly forces intervening in history, they are the lowest, and therefore the closest, and hence the most feared. This is how the translator of the Septuagint used *daimōn* to translate the Hebrew Gad, a false god meaning: Luck. Similarly, the Septuagint translator used daimonion to translate various words from Hebrew, such as *ēlōhīm* (god, idol), or *sā'ir* (hairy goat), or *lebēnā* ([altar] of brick), etc., in short anything connected with pagan worship.
- iv. Finally, the meaning of *doxa* (glory) in classical Greece. Etymologically speaking, the feminine noun *doxa* is derived from the verb *dokeō* (to appear, to seem, to think, to be of opinion), and therefore refers to the subjective aspect of things: what seems to me, what appears to me. In the philosopher Parmenides (5th century BC), it expresses the idea of opinion, as opposed to truth. In Plato, it denotes opinion as opposed to science, i.e. the sensible world of appearances, which can only be a reflection of the world of ideas, and therefore can only be a conjecture, a product of the imagination. In the same vein, it refers to the subjective opinion of a person, negative or positive, and therefore to his reputation, hence the idea of his "glory", i.e. his great reputation. As a corollary, the verb *doxazō* means "to have a thought, to imagine" and, in relation to a person, "to glorify". It is this word *doxa* that the Septuagint used to translate the Hebrew *kaḇōd*, which derives from the verb *kbd* meaning: to be heavy, to have weight. It is applied to a person who is "heavy", i.e. who has a lot of influence, and this on several levels: financial, political, military. The word is also applied to God, to describe His person in a visible way, sometimes His intimidating aspect; we can't see God, but we can see His glory, His influence.

2. Specific meaning in the passage analyzed

Having explored the whole semantic field of a word, it's time to return to the verse we're analyzing, and choose from among the possible meanings the precise one that the word takes on in the passage we're analyzing.

- a. Take, for example, the word *gē* (earth), which, according to our analysis of the Gospels, can take on five main meanings: the earth here below as opposed to heaven, our universe or world, the soil to be cultivated, the ground or mainland, and the country or political territory. If we analyze Mt 14:14 ("Then the boat was already several stadia from the land, being troubled by the waves, for the wind was contrary"), we can conclude that

the word "land" here refers to firm ground as opposed to water. In this context, the mainland is a symbol of what is reassuring, as opposed to the sea or lake where the disciples' boat experiences turbulence.

On the other hand, if we analyze Mt 2:6 ("And you Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means the least among the rulers of Judah"), we must conclude that the term here designates the land as a political territory, a region, a country, and that it is under Matthew's pen that this meaning recurs most often (9 times out of the 11 occurrences in the Gospels-Acts); we have an echo of a structure of Jewish thought that speaks of "the land of Egypt" or "the land of Canaan" or "the land of Israel" or "the land of Judah" to designate a region or country.

- b. The term *kyrios* (lord) provides another example. Its analysis reveals that it can designate various realities: 1) God, to avoid pronouncing his name; 2) after Easter, the first Christians took the habit of invoking Jesus under the name of Lord, the title that a Jew attributed to God; 3) the term can designate the owner of an estate over which he exercises lordship and for which servants work; 4) there is also the reference to the Septuagint version of Psalm 110:1, a psalm that has been given a messianic meaning: *kyrios* designates the messiah; 5) it is used in a number of other circumstances, such as the master-disciple relationship, or as a title of honor when addressing an individual (the equivalent of "sir"), or as an adjective in the expression "to be master of".

When we analyze Lk 10:1 ("Then, after these events, the Lord (*kyrios*) appointed others, seventy-two, and sent them two by two before his face to every city and place where he himself was about to come"), we must conclude that the title given here to Jesus is the one that will be attributed to him after Easter. This is surprising, given that we are in the midst of Jesus' ministry, and that, historically speaking, he was to be called either "Jesus" or "rabbi" or teacher. All this reminds us that the author, Luke, is telling this story after Easter, to a community of believers for whom Jesus is truly Lord.

- c. Lk 10:1 offers us an interesting example of a hermeneutical challenge, even if we know the various meanings of a word. We read: "Jesus sent them two by two before (*pro*) his face to every city and place where he himself was about to come". Analysis of the preposition *pro* (before) reveals two dimensions: a temporal dimension, and therefore refers to what precedes in time, and a spatial dimension, and therefore serves to designate what is in front of something else, such as being in front of a door. Here, in v. 1, *pro* primarily has a temporal meaning: the envoys precede Jesus' arrival in time. But it can also have a spatial connotation, for by preceding Jesus on a path that Jesus will also follow later, the envoys are ahead of Jesus in space.

That said, what does this precedence of the disciples mean? This isn't the first time Luke has spoken of precedence in sending out on mission. A few verses earlier (Lk 9:52), Jesus had sent messengers ahead of him to the Samaritans to prepare for his coming, though we don't know what this preparation consisted of. Then, in the next verse, we are told simply that Jesus was not welcomed, as if everyone had left at the same time and there had been no preparatory work on the part of the disciples. As for the sending out of the 72 before the coming of Jesus, mentioned in v. 1, we learn only a little later (v. 17) that the demons were subject to them. But how does this prepare for Jesus' coming, especially since he will be on the road until chap. 18, when he reaches Jerusalem? Luke never describes this preparation, or why it is necessary. In fact, the sending that precedes the coming of Jesus is probably to be understood in the context of the Christian community of the '85s: the Christian's mission is to open the way to faith through his witness, and thereby prepare the coming of Jesus; when Luke speaks of the messengers and the 72, he's talking about us who are sent to prepare the coming of Jesus in people's hearts.

- d. Yet another example of hermeneutical challenge despite lexicographical analysis comes from Lk 10:1: "Then, after these events, the Lord appointed others (*heterous*), seventy-two...". *Heteros* (other) is an adjective used here as a noun, a word that Luke uses regularly (of the 60 occurrences in the Gospels-Acts, 49 come from Luke's pen). But by definition, "other" is an attribute of a noun. But here, "other" refers to whom? In the preceding pericope, Luke recounts the interaction with three people: one wants to follow him, but Jesus seems to discourage him with his demands; Jesus calls another, but the latter replies that he must first bury his father; and a third wants to follow him, but only after bidding farewell to his family. So would "other" be the attribute of these people, and so Luke would like to tell us: Jesus chose other disciples than those who didn't want to follow him right away? This is unlikely, since the attribute "other" refers to people whom Jesus had previously designated (*anadeiknymi*). Unfortunately, this is the only time this verb appears in Luke's Gospel.

We have to go back to the beginning of ch. 9 to find a parallel, particularly in the section from v. 1-6, when Jesus gathers the Twelve and sends them out on a mission to proclaim God's reign and heal the sick, just as he will do with the Seventy-Two. So Luke means: Jesus appointed "other" disciples than the Twelve for the mission. Why wasn't Luke clearer? The problem is that he juggles several sources. In his section 8:4 - 9:50, Luke takes Mark's material and follows his sequence, but section 9:51 - 19:28, to which our pericope belongs, is a section of his own, where he abandons Mark's sequence, and inserts traditions of his own and pages from the Q Document, as Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem over ten chapters. Luke then seems to forget that these additions lose the link with what was presented earlier.

This is not Luke's only blunder. A typical example is Luke's rearrangement of the story of Peter's denial (22:56-62): whereas Mark cut the drama into three episodes, Luke preferred to combine them into one long episode, but when he later makes the connection with the Jews' mockery, after the scene where Peter weeps

bitterly, he simply writes: "The men who guarded him mocked him" (Lk 22:63); grammatically, the pronouns 'him' that designate the captive person being mocked would refer to Peter, who is the subject of the preceding sentence, whereas the reader knows full well that the person being mocked is indeed Jesus. So, in his editing work, Luke forgot to make the connection with Mark's sequence, a little "oversight".

C. The origin of the word and its place in the evangelist's vocabulary

Another stage in the lexicographical analysis aims to answer the questions: where does the word analyzed come from? What place does it occupy in the evangelist's vocabulary? What importance does he give it? Is it a clue to his style and theology?

Unfortunately, for this stage, the four Gospels do not present the same level of facility in answering these questions. Such an analysis assumes the theory of two sources, i.e. Matthew and Luke had in hand Mark's Gospel, which they took up and modified, as well as the Q Document. From this perspective, to enter their literary and theological universe, we must first observe how Matthew and Luke modified Mark. Analyzing Matthew's and Luke's use of the Q Document is trickier, as we don't have a copy of this document; conclusions become highly hypothetical. What about the analysis of Mark and John? We know they relied on sources to write their gospels, but it's often foolhardy to draw a line between what is a source and what is redactional. Often, it is the recurrence of vocabulary and themes that allows the biblical scholar to glimpse their literary and theological universe. On this point, we must acknowledge the remarkable work of M.E. Boismard in two major works: *Synopse des quatre évangiles*, t. II and t. III. Paris: Cerf, 1972 and 1977, which presents an in-depth analysis of the stylistic characteristics of each evangelist. But his approach moves away from the two-source theory to that of four initial documents (A, B, C, Q) used to write the Gospels, each of which would have known at least two editions. This theory has not met with much enthusiasm among biblical scholars, as it appears highly hypothetical and overly complex.

Let's start with the easy part, the editorial work that can be observed in Matthew and Luke. In the passages they take from Mark, all we have to do is compare what they add or omit from their source.

1. Matthew's editorial work

Let's take the term *kyrios* (lord) in Matthew. When we compare a number of passages from Mark taken up by Matthew, we get this:

Mark	Matthew's version
"If you want, you can cleanse me."	(8,2) " <u>Lord</u> , if you want, you can cleanse me."
(4: 38: storm stilling) And they awakened him and said to him: "Teacher (didaskale), do you not care that we perish?"	(8:25) And they awakened him, saying, " <u>Lord</u> , save us, we are about to perish."
(7: 26) the woman...syrophenician... was begging him to drive the demon out of her daughter	(15: 22) A Canaanite woman... cried out, saying, "Have mercy on me, <u>Lord</u> , son of David: my daughter is being mistreated by a demon."
(8:32: Announcement of passion) And Peter, taking him to himself, began to admonish him.	(16: 22) And Peter, taking him to himself, admonishing him, said to him, "Be it far from you, <u>Lord</u> ."
(9: 5: transfiguration) And when Peter spoke, he said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here"	(17: 4) And when Peter spoke, he said to Jesus, " <u>Lord</u> , it is good that we are here"
(9: 17: healing of the epileptic child) someone... replied: "Teacher (didaskale), I have brought my son to you."	(17: 14) a man came ... and said: " <u>Lord</u> , have mercy on my son."
(10: 47-51: (blind man/men of Jericho) And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, "Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me! "...but he cried out much more, "Son of David, have mercy on me! "Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you? "The blind man said to him, " <i>Rabboni</i> , let me see!"	(20: 30-33) When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, saying, " <u>Lord</u> , have mercy on us, son of David! "...but they cried out more loudly, saying, " <u>Lord</u> have mercy on us, Son of David! "Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you? "They said to him, " <u>Lord</u> , let our eyes be opened!"
(14: 19: announcement of Judas' betrayal) They began to be saddened and said to him one after the other: "(Could it be) me?"	(26: 22) And they were very sad and began to say to him, one by one, "Could it be me, <u>Lord</u> ?"

As we can see, Matthew replaces terms like "you", Jesus, master, *rabbi* or *rabboni* found in Mark with the title Lord. Or, when Mark's narrative is in indirect style, he transforms it into direct style and adds the vocative "Lord". What can we conclude? Two things.

- i. Firstly, Matthew likes to clarify and standardize vocabulary; he designates the same realities with the same words.
- ii. Secondly, we find in Matthew the beginnings of a high Christology that will reach its peak with John, i.e. Jesus takes on more and more of the traits proper to God. Remember that Mark's Gospel is usually dated around 67 AD, and Matthew's around 80 or 85 AD. Over this period of more than 10 or 15 years, thinking about the person of Jesus has evolved and been refined, and the features that associate him with God or with faith after Easter become more important than those that reflect historical data as it stands. Thus, in Matthew's eyes, the Canaanite woman expresses her faith by calling him : Lord.

2. Luke's editorial work

Let's turn to Luke, who belongs to the Greek world. We can observe his redactional work when he takes up three passages from Mark concerning the unclean spirit.

Mark 1:23	Luke 4:33
And immediately there was a man in their synagogue in <u>unclean spirit</u> and he shouted	And in the synagogue there was a man having <u>the spirit of an unclean demon</u> and he cried out
Mark 5	Luke 8:29
8 For he said to him, "Come out, <u>unclean spirit</u> , of the man." [4 because he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been broken by him, and the fetters broken, and no one could tame him.]	For he commanded the <u>unclean spirit</u> to come out of the man. For many times it had taken hold of him, and he was kept bound with chains and fetters, and breaking the bonds, he was dragged by the <u>demon</u> into the deserts.
Mark 9	Luke 9:42
20 And they brought it to him. And when they saw him, <u>the spirit</u> immediately shook him... 25 Now Jesus... commanded the <u>unclean spirit</u> ... 27 (taking him by his hand) straightened him out and he stood up.	While he was still approaching, the <u>demon</u> threw him (to the ground) and (shook him). Now Jesus commanded the <u>unclean spirit</u> and healed the child and delivered him to his father.

What do we observe? Luke clarifies for his audience that an unclean spirit is the equivalent of a demon. Why is this? In the Greek world, people were more familiar with the notion of demon than that of unclean spirit, which was part of the Jewish universe. We saw earlier that *daimonion* is the diminutive of *daimōn*, and someone like Plato considered it a divine but inferior being. According to the root of the word, *daimōn* designates that which disturbs and tears, and would have an animistic origin to describe the positive or negative powers that influence the course of human life.

So is it any wonder that Luke prefers the term "demon" to "unclean spirit" when referring to the forces of evil? In Lk 10:17, for example, the disciples say: "Even the demons submit to us".

3. Matthew and Luke's use of the Q Document

When Matthew and Luke insert passages from the Q Document into their gospels, the analysis to determine their redactional work is much more delicate, as we have no copy of this source, and so it's impossible for us to establish parallels as we can with Mark. We therefore have to resort to other criteria, such as our knowledge of the familiar vocabulary of an evangelist, or of their theology. Let's take the example of the pericope on the "Our Father".

Let's compare the most literal translation of Matthew's Greek text with that of Luke's, underlining similar words.

Matthew	Luke
6: 9 "Thus therefore <u>pray</u> yourselves, ' <u>Father</u> of us the (one) in the heavens, <u>may be hallowed the name of you</u> ."	11: 2a Then, he said to them, "When you might <u>pray</u> , say: ' <u>Father, may be hallowed the name of you</u> ."
6: 10 <u>May come the kingdom of you</u> . May happen the will of you, as in heaven also on earth.	11: 2b <u>May come the kingdom of you</u> .
6: 11 <u>The bread of us the sufficient give us</u> today.	11: 3 <u>The bread of us the sufficient give us</u> the by day.
6: 12 <u>And remit us the debts of us</u> , as also, us, <u>we remit to the debtors of us</u> .	11: 4a <u>And remit us the sins of us</u> , for <u>also we, we remit to all having debts with us</u> .

6: 13 And you should not bring us into trial, but deliver us from the evil." 11: 4b And you should not bring us into trial"

A first observation: while Luke presents us with five requests in Jesus' prayer (1. hallowed name; 2. kingdom come; 3. sufficient bread; 4. remission of sins; 5. avoidance of trial), Matthew presents us with seven (1. hallowed name; 2. kingdom come; 3. do God's will; 4. sufficient bread; 5. remission of sins; 6. avoidance of trial; 7. deliverance from the evil). Did the Q document contain five or seven requests?

As he did with the Beatitudes, Matthew seems to have amplified his source. The first amplification is this phrase: "Let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth". This theme of God's will (*thelēma*) is an essential one in Matthew's theology, appearing in passages peculiar to him, such as 7:17 ("It is not by saying to me: Lord, Lord, that one will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is by doing the will (*thelēma*) of my Father who is in heaven"), as 21: 31 with the parable of the two sons ("Which of the two has done the will (*thelēma*) of the father") and especially 26:42 in Gethsemane ("My Father, he said, if this cup cannot pass without my drinking it, your will (*thelēma*) be done! "). Matthew, like every good Jew, insists on action, orthopraxis, conformity to God's will.

Matthew's second amplification concerns deliverance from the Evil One, which basically refers to Satan, the tempter, as he indicates in the account of Jesus' trials / temptations (Mt 4:10). The term Evil One (*ponēros*) appears in his parable of the tares, for it is he who sows the tares. He alone speaks of the Evil One as a person, as in 5:37 ("Let your language be: Yes? Yes, No? No: whatever more is said comes from the Evil One (*ponēros*)"). Never elsewhere in the Gospels does the term "evil" refer to a person.

Matthew's other modifications are noteworthy: the adjective "our" in the expression "Father of us" or "our Father". He transforms this prayer of Jesus into a community prayer to make it more universal, as he did with the beatitudes about the poor by transforming it into "poor in spirit", spiritualizing poverty. But we can easily guess that the original expression is that to which Luke bears witness, i.e. simply "Father", as shown by Jn 17:1 ("Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son..." and Mk 14:36 ("He said, 'Abba, Father, to you all things are possible'"). Similarly, the expression "the one in heaven" is typical of Matthew's vocabulary, and he is practically the only one to use it (13 times in his Gospel, the only exception being Mk 11:25).

But Luke, too, seems to make some modifications to the Q Document, even if they are less significant. Firstly, the expression "the per day" (*to kath' hēmeran*), i.e. daily, which qualifies the bread, a thoroughly Lucan expression (see Lk 9:23; 16:19; 19:47; 22:53; Acts 2:46.47; 3:2; 16:5; 17:11; 19:9). Secondly, Luke speaks of the forgiveness of "sins", while Matthew speaks of the forgiveness of "debts". Now, in Aramaic, the word "debt" was often understood in the sense of "sins". So, in the Q Document, the word "debts" must have been present, and Luke wanted to interpret its meaning for his Greek audience. Moreover, he returns to the word "debts" at the end of 11:4a ("those who are indebted to us").

It is also likely that the Q Document text had this form (a very literal translation of the Greek):

Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
the bread we need give us today,
and forgive us our debts
and do not bring us into trial.

4. Mark's editorial work

Analyzing Mark's redactional work poses a particular challenge: how can we determine whether what he writes is a literary creation from his pen or simply a copy from his source? And yet, it's quite possible that many of the features of his Gospel are from his own pen.

- a. For Marc is an excellent storyteller, and like all good storytellers he likes to hold attention in various ways, such as using exotic vocabulary, for example Aramaic words: *abba* (dad), *elōi* (my God), *ephphatha* (be opened), *korban* (offering to God), *talitha koumi* (Little girl, get up), *rhabbouni* (my teacher), *hōsanna* (come to our aid).
- b. Another trait of a good storyteller is amplification: to stimulate the imagination, he exaggerates. This is most apparent in certain miracle stories. Take, for example, the story of the healing of an epileptic child, where Mark probably merged two sources, an exorcism story and an epilepsy story. This story was taken up by Matthew and Luke. All Mark's words taken up by Matthew or Luke have been underlined. In blue are the words shared by Matthew and Luke.

Mark 9	Matthieu 17	Luc 9
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14 And <u>having come</u> toward the disciples, they saw <u>a crowd large</u> around them and scribes discussing toward them.	14 And <u>having come</u> toward <u>the crowd</u>	37 Then, it came to pass the next day, them <u>having come</u> down from the mountain, met him <u>a crowd large</u> .
15 And immediately all the crowd having seen him, they were struck with stupor and running forward they were greeting him.		
16 And he questioned them, "What are you discussing with them?"		
17-18a And answered to <u>him</u> one of <u>the crowd</u> : " <u>Teacher</u> , I brought <u>the son of me</u> toward you, having <u>a spirit</u> mute. And whenever if it might catch him, it dashes him and he <u>foams</u> and he gnashes the teeth and he is withered.	15 they approached <u>him</u> a man kneeling to him and <u>saying</u> : "Lord, have mercy on <u>the son of me</u> , <u>for</u> he is epileptic and badly suffers. For often he falls into the fire and often into the water.	38-39 And behold a male from <u>the crowd</u> cried out <u>saying</u> , "Teacher, I implore you to look upon the son of me, <u>for</u> only son to me he is, and behold <u>a spirit</u> takes him and suddenly it cries and it convulses him with <u>foam</u> and with difficulty it go away from him breaking him.
18b And I said <u>to the disciples of you</u> in order they might cast it <u>out</u> , <u>and they</u> did not have strength.	16 And I brought him <u>to the disciples of you</u> <u>and they</u> were not able to treat him.	40 And implored <u>the disciples of you</u> in order that they might cast <u>out it</u> , <u>and they</u> were not able.
19 Then, him, <u>having answered</u> to them he <u>says</u> , " <u>O generation faithless</u> , <u>until when toward you will I be?</u> <u>Until when will I bear with you?</u> <u>Bring him</u> toward <u>me</u> ."	17 Then, <u>having answered</u> , <u>the Jesus said</u> : " <u>O generations faithless</u> and having been perverted, <u>until when with you will I be?</u> <u>Until when will I bear with you?</u> <u>Bring him to me here</u> ."	41 Then, <u>having answered</u> , <u>the Jesus said</u> , " <u>O generations faithless</u> and having been perverted, <u>until when will I be toward you</u> and <u>will I bear with you?</u> Lead toward [me] <u>here</u> the son of you.
20 And they brought him toward him. And having seen him, the spirit immediately <u>convulsed</u> him, and having fallen upon the ground he was rolling foaming.		42a Then, when him approaching, it dashed him the demon and it <u>convulsed</u> .
And he questioned the father of him, "How much time it is like this has been happening to him?" Then, him he said, "Out of childhood.		
22 And <u>often</u> and <u>into the fire</u> him he threw <u>and into water</u> , in order it might destroy him. But if anything you are able to, help us having been with compassion over us."	[15b For <u>often</u> he falls <u>into the fire</u> <u>and</u> often <u>into the water</u> .]	
23 Then, the Jesus said to him, "The [word] if I am able, all [things are] possible to the [one] believing.		
24 Immediately having cried the father of the child said, "I believe. Help me in the unbelief.		
25 Then, having seen <u>the Jesus</u> that running together a crowd, <u>he rebuked the spirit the unclean</u> saying to him, "the mute and deaf spirit, I, order you, come out from him, and no longer enter into him."	18a And <u>he rebuked</u> him <u>the Jesus</u>	42b Then, <u>the Jesus rebuked the spirit the unclean</u>

26-27 <u>And</u> having cried and having convulse a lot, <u>it came out</u> . And he became like dead, so that the many [of them] would say that he died. Then, the Jesus seized the hand of him, he rose him up, and he stood up.	18b and it came out from him the demon <u>and</u> was treated the child from this hour.	42c <u>and</u> was healed the child <u>and</u> he gave back him to the father of him.
		43a Then they were amazed at God's greatness.

The first purpose of this parallel is to show how much longer Mark's version of this miracle is than those of Matthew and Luke. And this observation can be applied to many other accounts.

A second observation comes from a close reading of Mark's account. This reading reveals several anomalies and a sloppy style. Mark writes in v. 14a: "And coming to the disciples". What is the subject of "coming"? In the previous verse, Jesus speaks to Peter, James and John at the end of the account of the transfiguration on a mountain. We must then assume that this is Jesus, Peter, James and John coming down from the mountain. But Mark writes that these people are going to the disciples. But aren't Peter, James and John also disciples? So they are disciples coming to the disciples. Why didn't Mark clarify things by saying "the other" disciples who remained at the bottom of the mountain?

The rest of v. 14 raises questions when Mark writes: "they saw a large crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them". We must assume that "them" refers to the "other" disciples. But what is surprising is the presence of scribes, who only appear in this verse and play no role in the rest of the story?

V. 15 is strange: "And immediately all the crowd, seeing him, were astonished and ran to him, greeting him". For one thing, this verse interrupts the narrative. Indeed, v. 14 ends with the scribes' discussion with the other disciples. And v. 16 seems to be a continuation of v. 14, as Jesus questions the disciples on the subject of the scribes' discussion with them; v. 15 is therefore out of place. On the other hand, it's hard to understand why in v. 15 the crowd is seized with amazement (*ekthambeo*) on seeing Jesus; this verb *ekthambeo* is unique to Mark (Mt = 0; Mk = 4; Lk = 0; Jn = 0; Acts = 0; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0) in the whole of the NT, and is used elsewhere only in Gethsemane to describe Jesus' state (14:33) and after the resurrection to describe the state of the women before the young man who tells them of Jesus' resurrection (16:5-6). Similarly, the verb "to greet" (*aspazomai*) is not used again until the Passion, when the soldiers greet Jesus clad in purple and wearing the crown of thorns, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews".

V. 16: "And he asked them, What were you discussing with them?" We must assume that "he" refers to Jesus, as the pronoun is singular. But what does "them" mean? This personal pronoun could refer to the "other" disciples or scribes. But since in v. 14 Mark writes that the scribes were discussing with the disciples, i.e. the initiative for the discussion came from the scribes, we must assume here that "they" refers to the scribes.

V. 17a is surprising: "And he said to him, one of the crowd, 'Teacher, I have brought my son to you with a mute spirit'". In v. 16, Jesus put a question to the scribes, but here the answer comes from the child's father.

The child's illness also raises questions. First, in v. 17, the father tells us that the child has a mute spirit. But in v. 18a ("And where he seizes him, he throws him, and he foams and gnashes his teeth and withers"), he gives all the symptoms of a case of epilepsy.

V. 19: "Then he answered them and said, 'O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I endure you? Bring him to me'". What does Mark mean by "them"? Who is meant by "unbelieving generation"? The disciples, the crowd, the scribes?

V. 20: "And they brought him to him. And seeing him the spirit immediately shook him violently, and falling to the ground, he rolled about foaming". Here we have four occurrences of the personal pronoun "him". This is a typical Markan sentence. On the one hand, he remains imprecise about the characters ("him" sometimes refers to Jesus, sometimes to the child), which sometimes leaves us confused; for example, in the expression "seeing him", what does "him" refer to? Jesus or the child? Probably Jesus, but a few words later, "him" obviously refers to the child. On the other hand, why describe the symptoms of epilepsy a second time? Finally, Mark tells us for the 2nd time that the child is being brought (he had already been brought in v. 17). The probable merge of two sources helps to amplify and lengthen the story.

V. 21: "And he asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' Then he said, 'Since childhood'". Why does Mark introduce this question, which does nothing for the child's healing? Is it possible that the evangelist, even if he receives these details from a source, is keen to add them, because wanting to be a good storyteller, he is keen to make his account come alive with lots of detail.

V. 22 : “And often also into a fire he casts him and into a water that he may destroy him. But if you are capable of anything, help us, being moved with compassion over us”. Once again, the father describes the child’s illness. But this response goes beyond Jesus’ question in v. 21, who simply asked how long the illness had been going on. All this amplifies the story.

V. 25: “Then, seeing the Jesus that a crowd was running to him, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him: “The mute and deaf spirit, I command you, go out of him and never enter him again.” Mark seems to be saying that Jesus hurried to heal the man before the crowd arrived. But this contradicts v. 15 and 17, where the crowd is already there to greet Jesus, and the child’s father was one of the crowd. What’s more, we forget here that the child was epileptic and go back to the father’s first description of the illness, in which the child is mute.

V. 26-27: “And having cried out and shaken much, he came out. And he became as if dead, so that many said he was dead. Then the Jesus having seized his hand, awoke [*egeiro*] him, and he arose [*anistemi*].” Once again, we note the imprecision of the personal pronouns: “he” came out; “he” became as if dead. Who does “he” refer to? We can guess that the first “he” refers to the “unclean spirit”, and the second “he” to the child. Mark forces us to assume many things, without bothering to clarify. Finally, let’s note that Jesus’ taking hold of the hand and causing the healed being to rise is typical of a scene in Mark, since it takes place in Mk 1:31 with Peter’s mother-in-law (“He caused her to awaken [*egeiro*] by taking hold of her hand”) and in Mk 5:41 with Jairus’ daughter (“And having taken hold of the child’s hand... ‘Awake [*egeiro*]’... and... she stood up [*anistemi*]”). The verbs *egeiro* (wake up) and *anistemi* (stand up) are part of the typical NT vocabulary for describing Jesus’ resurrection. This vocabulary is found here in v. 26-27. To emphasize the parallelism, Mark insists that the child is considered dead.

What can we conclude? According to M.E. Boismard, *Synopse des quatre évangiles, II*, p. 256-257, Mark would have merged two healing accounts here, that of a mute child, and that of an epileptic child. Unfortunately, this fusion is a little clumsy: Mark doesn’t bother to rationalize the whole and smooth out the connections, so we sometimes end up with a rough, chaotic narrative. At most, he amplifies the details, which not only makes the story gripping, but also emphasizes Jesus’ power. And, of course, he dresses the whole story in the colors of Jesus’ death/resurrection.

- c. There are few accounts of Mark that allow us to draw an independent parallel with other versions of this story, since it is usually Matthew and Luke who copy Mark. Nevertheless, we can find a few. The parable of the mustard seed is one such story, for it has come down to us in two versions, the one presented by Mark, and the one from the Q Document, mostly taken up by Luke. We have underlined the words in Mark that are taken up by Matthew and Luke, and highlighted in blue the similar words in Matthew and Luke that come from the Q Document.

Mark 4	Matthew 13	Luke
30 And <u>he was saying</u> , "How should <u>I compare the kingdom of God</u> or in what <u>parable</u> I should <u>put it</u> ?"	31a Another <u>parable</u> he <u>put</u> before to them <u>saying</u> ,	18 Therefore he <u>was saying</u> , "To what <u>comparable</u> is <u>the kingdom of God</u> and <u>to what will I compare it</u> ?"
31-32 As <u>a grain of mustard</u> , that when it would be <u>sown</u> upon the earth, <u>smallest</u> being of <u>all the seeds</u> the ones upon the earth, and <u>when</u> it would be sown, it goes up <u>and becomes greater</u> of <u>all the garden plants</u> and it makes <u>branches</u> large, <u>so as</u> it is able under the shade of it <u>the birds of the sky</u> to dwell.	31b-32 " <u>Comparable is the kingdom of heavens to a grain of mustard that having taken a man</u> he <u>sowed</u> in the field of him. On the one hand, <u>the smallest</u> it is <u>of all the seeds</u> , on the other hand <u>when</u> it is <u>grown greater of the garden plants</u> it is and <u>it becomes a tree</u> , so as to come <u>the birds of the sky</u> and to <u>dwell in the branches of it</u> ."	19 <u>Comparable it is to a grain of mustard that having taken a man</u> he cast into a garden of him, and it <u>grew</u> and <u>became</u> into a <u>tree</u> , and <u>the birds of the sky dwelt in the branches of it</u> ."

Here are a few observations.

- Luke seems to have respected the Q Document the best. His modification would be the word “garden” to replace the word “field”: addressing a Greek audience living mainly in towns, he wanted to adapt the scene to an urban environment; on this point, the word “field” in Matthew would better reflect the Palestinian agricultural milieu of Q Document. Luke, on the other hand, better reflects the Jewish milieu of the Q Document with the word “to cast” [mustard seed], a Semitic term.

The Q Document could therefore have the following form:

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that having taken a man and cast into his field, and it grew into a tree, and the birds of the air took shelter in its branches.

Note that the mention of birds in the branches is an echo of Dan 4:7-9 (LXX: Dan 4:10-12): this is the story of a tree that becomes immense, an image of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, and ends thus: "and in its branches sheltered the birds of the air", i.e. the peoples of the earth.

- Mark's account comes from the same source, but in a different version. M.E. Boismard calls this source "Document A", and according to him, the story appeared in this form:

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed which, when sown on the earth, grows up and makes great branches so that the birds of the air can take shelter under its shade.

Note the ending, which is no longer "the birds of the air took shelter in the branches of him", but rather: "the birds of the air can take shelter under its shade"; the birds are no longer in the branches, but under the shade of the tree's branches. This is an echo of Ezek 17:22-24, where the restoration of God's people, under the impetus of their king, is compared to a newly planted cedar, and the text ends thus: "It will bear branches, produce fruit, become a magnificent cedar. All kinds of birds will dwell in it, they will dwell in the shade of its branches", i.e. the peoples of the earth come to find protection in its shade.

- If we accept this hypothesis, what do we observe from Mark's pen? He would have added two phrases: first "it is the smallest of all seeds", then "it becomes larger than all vegetable plants". Why would he do this? It's easy to imagine that the first recipients of his gospel, an urban milieu (probably Rome), couldn't have guessed that the mustard seed was a small seed and that, as it grew, it reached impressive proportions. Mark felt it important to make these clarifications for those uninitiated in agriculture, as there was a risk of losing the point of the parable, which asserts that despite the very modest beginnings of the kingdom through mission, that of Jesus and his disciples, this mission would one day unfold in all its force when all the tribes of Israel, foreshadowed by Jesus' formation of the circle of Twelve, were gathered together. Mark, as a pastor, found this hermeneutical effort essential.
- d. Another passage from Mark allows us to draw a parallel with another version of this passage: Mk 10:11 || Mt 19:9 || Mt 5:32 || Lk 16:18.

Mark 10	Matthew 19	Matthew	Luke
11 And he said to them, " <u>Whoever releases (from a marriage bond) his woman and marries another, he is an adulterer</u> to her;	9 Then, I say to you that " <u>Whoever releases (from a marriage bond) his woman, apart from sexual immorality, and marries another, he is an adulterer</u>	5: 32a Then, I, I say to you that <u>everyone releasing (from a marriage bond) his woman, except for on account for sexual immorality, makes her to be adulteress,</u>	16: 18a <u>Everyone releasing (from a marriage bond) his woman and marrying a different commits adultery.</u>
		<u>and whoever shall marry her having been released (from a marriage bond), he is an adulterer.</u>	16: 18b <u>and who marrying her having been released (from a marriage bond) by a husband commits adultery.</u>
12 And if she, having released (from a marriage bond) her husband, marries another, she is an adulteress.			

- Let's recall the account in Mk 10:1-9, where some Pharisees ask Jesus what he thinks of the ticket for repudiating a wife required by Jewish law, which was traced back to Moses. In Jewish circles, only the man could repudiate his wife, and the reason could be anything, including the fact that a woman had burnt a dish or that the man had found a more beautiful woman (this is how Deut. 24:1, which speaks of a "blemish" or "something to be ashamed of" in the wife, was interpreted; see Philo of Alexandria, De Specialibus Legibus, 3.5 #30-31 and Mishna, Nachin). Now, through Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24, Jesus recalls as a prophet the deep commitment God intended marriage to imply, where the man leaves his family to become one with his wife. The story ends with Jesus saying: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder". Then, in v. 10, Mark shifts the scene to the house where the disciples question Jesus, a way

of situating us in the time of the first Christian communities and showing us how, following discussions, they applied Jesus' teaching. We are witnessing the beginnings of canon law.

- Mark, Matthew and Luke reflect two versions of this early canon law. Matthew and Luke merge what they receive from Mark with what they receive from the Q Document. This Q Document probably had this form:

Any man who repudiates his wife, makes her an adulteress and who would marry a repudiated woman commits adultery.

Why does repudiating a woman make her an adulteress? Let's not forget that in the Palestinian environment, women have no social status and their only means of support is through a husband. However, if she is repudiated, she no longer has a husband to support her, so she must urgently find another if she is to survive. So she has no choice but to commit adultery. Note that Matthew introduced an exception to the indissolubility of marriage: a case of *porneia*, a Greek word for any kind of sexual immorality. This exception was in force in the Matthaean community (probably in Antioch). Biblical scholars do not agree on its content. As this community was made up of a large number of Jewish converts, it is likely that *porneia* refers to everything that was abominable for a Jew: consanguineous relations and adultery, which was punishable by death.

- Mk 10:11 for its part probably reflects a version similar to the Q Document, where we find the same key words: *apolyō* (to untie), *gynē* (woman), *gameō* (to marry), *moichaō* (to commit adultery). But what is remarkable is that Mark's version is adapted to the Roman milieu where, unlike the Jewish milieu, the woman could also initiate divorce. The other remarkable point is that the Markan version is presented under a casuistic-type structure, with a protasis and an apodosis:

Protasis: If, perchance, someone releases (from the bonds of marriage) his wife and marries another

Apodosis: [Then] he commits adultery with her

Protasis: If, perchance, having released [from the bonds of marriage] her husband, she marries another,

Apodosis: [Then] she commits adultery.

It may come as a surprise to find such a well-defined casuistic structure. But let's not forget that we're probably in Rome, and the Romans had a reputation for great legal culture. Does this explain the strange expression in v. 11: [adulterer] "to her" (*ep' autēn*)? What does "to her" mean? Our Bibles have ruled for the first wife: the man commits adultery with his first wife. What does this mean? Adultery is not seen as a moral state (i.e. being in a state of adultery), but as an action that offends someone, like a broken contract that penalizes someone. The expression "to her" therefore refers to the person who has been wronged. It's surprising that, in this casuistic structure, we don't use the same expression when it's the woman who breaks the contract, as if the man wasn't really injured. This suggests that, in the 1st century, women had more to lose than men, even in Roman society.

5. John

With John, we enter a different universe, and many words take on a meaning of their own. We can assume that he knew both oral and written sources; certain parallels with the Synoptics bear witness to this, such as the stories around John the Baptist, the sellers driven from the temple, the multiplication of the loaves, the miraculous catch, Jesus' last supper, the passion with Peter's denial and Judas' betrayal, the trial before Pilate, the empty tomb. What interests us here is the specific color that the Fourth Gospel gives to words that also appear in the Synoptics.

- a. Take this sentence from the discourse on the bread of life (literal translation): "No one is able to come to me unless the Father has sent him, let him draw near, and I will make him rise (*anistēmi*) on the last day" (Jn 6:44). Let's take a closer look at this verb *anistēmi*, frequent in the Gospels-Acts: Mt = 4; Mk = 17; Lk = 27; Jn = 8; Acts = 45; 1Jn = 0; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. It literally means: to stand up.

When we go through the Gospels-Acts, we notice that it can designate four different realities.

- The gesture of rising up to get going. For example, Lk 1:39: "In those days Mary rose up (*anistēmi*) and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country".
- The fact that Jesus was raised from the world of the dead and passed into the world of God. For example, Lk 24:46: "and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise (*anistēmi*) from the dead on the third day".

- The Jewish belief that at the end of time there will be a resurrection of the dead. For example, Mk 12:25: "For when they rise (*anistēmi*) from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.
- The fact that a person comes back to life, which could be translated as resuscitation. For example, Lk 9:19: "They answered, "John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has risen (*anistēmi*)".

Among these four major realities, it is the first that largely dominates, as can be seen from these statistics.

<i>anistēmi</i>	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts
To stand up	4	9	21	1	36
Jesus who has risen from the dead	0	6	3	1	7
Return to life or resuscitation	0	0	3	1	2
Final resurrection of the dead	0	2	0	5	0
Total	4	17	27	8	45

Here, in v. 44, John refers to the resurrection of the dead. However, when we look at the whole New Testament, we notice a certain ambiguity: who will be risen up, believers only, or everyone. Several texts speak only of the resurrection of the righteous or of those attached to Christ: "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are judged worthy to share in this age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Lk 20:34-35); thus only those who are judged worthy will be resurrected. Paul says similar things: "Since we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, God will take with him" (1 Thess 4:14); it seems that only those who have died believing will be raised. On the other hand, other passages in the New Testament speak of a resurrection for all, such as this one where Paul speaks to the governor Felix: "having hope in God, as they themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and of sinners" (24:15); everyone is resurrected, even if the fate of each one is different.

The same ambiguity is found in John. On the one hand, he seems to assume that only the believer will be risen: "Yes, this is my Father's will, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:39); clearly, only the believer will inherit eternal life and be raised by Jesus at the last day. But on the other hand, in a speech addressed to the Jews, Jesus says: "Do not be surprised, for the hour is coming when all those who are in the tombs will hear his (son of man's) voice and come out: those who have done good, to a resurrection of life; those who have done evil, to a resurrection of judgment (5:28-29); clearly, those who have done good and those who have done evil are risen, even though it is not clear what will be the fate of those undergoing judgment. And here, in v. 44, the promise of resurrection concerns only believers.

This ambiguity cannot be resolved without addressing another ambiguity, that which concerns what has already been given and what will be given later: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (Jn 5:24); thus, the believer already has eternal life. The Pauline letters will say similar things: "buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him, because you believed in the power of God who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:12); for the believer, the resurrection has already taken place. Yet, even though he already has eternal life, the believer seems to be missing something. In fact, he seems to be missing two things.

- i. For, in spite of having eternal life, physical death awaits him ("He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live", Jn 11:25); he must therefore overcome this physical death, as Paul expresses it in this way: "And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Rom 8:11)
- ii. Then there is the prospect of being able to live in true intimacy with Jesus: "Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may behold my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world" (Jn 17:24). This point will be taken up again in his first letter: "Beloved, even now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made manifest. We know that in that manifestation we will be like him, because we will see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2).

A key to resolving these ambiguities is that of first century Judaism, a framework that permeated Jesus and the first Christian communities, an eschatological framework in which history is not infinite, but will have an end, an end seen with an apocalyptic vision, i.e. of intervention and final revelation of God that will be accompanied by a judgment ("until the coming of the Ancient One who rendered judgment for the saints of the Most High, and the time of the coming of the Holy One"). The end is seen with an apocalyptic vision, i.e., the intervention and final revelation of God, which will be accompanied by a judgment ("until the coming of the Ancient One, who will render judgment for the saints of the Most High, and the time will come for the saints to possess the kingdom", Dan 7:22). Another aspect of this framework is the obligation to have a body

in order to live; in the Jewish universe, there is no "soul" without a body. This is how Paul must answer the question, "But how do the dead rise? With what body do they come back? (1 Cor 15:35). His answer will be to speak of a "spiritual" body (1 Cor 15:44), which all will have to put on as one puts on a dawn. In this context, the Jewish milieu envisaged a resurrection of the dead for all the deceased, in order first to identify them well, and then to exercise a final judgment, sending some to the light, others to the night (for an example of this vision, see [1 Enoch](#)).

It is in this context that we must read our v. 44. Even though the believer has already passed from death to life, he needs divine intervention to overcome physical death. This victory over physical death seems to be reserved for the end of human history, when everyone will be given a pneumatic body. At that time, the believer, having become like his master, will be able to contemplate him in all his glory.

- b. Jn 16, 14 nous révèle d'autres particularités de Jean : « Celui-là me glorifiera (*doxazō*), parce que de ce qui est mien il recevra et annoncera à vous ». Le verbe *doxazō* (glorifier, rendre gloire, transfigurer, honorer, vanter, louer, célébrer) se rencontre surtout dans l'évangile de Jean : Mt = 4; Mc = 1; Lc = 9; Jn = 14; Ac = 2). Il faut aussi mentionner le substantif *doxa* (bonne opinion, honneur, estime, gloire, éclat, splendeur) qui se rencontre également surtout chez Jean : Mt = 7; Mc = 3; Lc = 13; Jn = 19; Ac = 4). Sur le plan étymologique, *doxa* est dérivé du verbe *dokēō* (paraître, sembler, penser, être d'avis), et donc renvoie à la réputation d'une personne, à sa renommée. D'ailleurs, la Septante s'est servie de *doxa* pour traduire l'hébreu *kēbôd*, dont la racine signifie avoir du poids : en effet, quelqu'un qui a du poids renvoie à quelqu'un qui a de l'influence, qui est « pesant », qui est connu et a une grande réputation.

Let's start with the word *doxa*. Throughout the Gospels, the word "glory" is given a variety of meanings, which can be grouped into five categories.

- The first category is purely human. Glory refers to the wealth and power of certain human beings. For example, this was one of the temptations Jesus had to endure: "Again the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world with their glory (*doxa*)" (Mt 4:8; see also Mt 6:29; Lk 4:6; 12:27).
- The glory reflects the divine milieu, in particular his authority and power, which enables him to play the role of judge. It is into this world that the risen Jesus enters, for example: "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory (*doxa*)" (Mk 13:26; see also Mt 16:27; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31; Mk 8:38; 10:37; Lk 9:26; 21:27; 24:26).
- In a few rare cases, and only in Luke, glory reflects the divine milieu, but without any connotation of authority or power, but under the symbolism of light, like the brilliance of a precious and mysterious stone through which a message is heard: "The Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory (*doxa*) of the Lord enveloped them in its brightness; and they were seized with great fear" (Lk 2:9; see also 9:31).
- There is also the expression "to give glory to God", which means to recognize God's action and power, and to accept to be under his authority. For example: "Glory (*doxa*) to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those who are the objects of his pleasure" (Lk 2:14).
- Finally, there is the meaning found only in John, introduced in the prologue: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory (*doxa*), the glory (*doxa*) which he received from his Father as the only Son, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). This glory is something that can be seen and contemplated, like someone's face or personality (see also 17:24). This glory is particularly evident at certain moments, such as when Jesus performs extraordinary actions that are traditionally called miracles, as at Cana, when water becomes wine (2:11), or at Bethany, when Lazarus is raised from the dead (11:4,40).

Let's turn now to *doxazō* (to glorify). Unsurprisingly, the use of the verb follows the same logic as that of the noun.

- The synoptic gospels first use the verb "to glorify" in the same sense as "to give glory", i.e., to acknowledge God's action and power, and to place oneself under his authority: "So shall your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify (*doxazō*) your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16; see also 9:8; 15:31; Mk 2:12; Lk 2:20; 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47).
- Secondly, the verb is mostly used in the passive to express the human action of bestowing great reputation or honors on someone: "When therefore you give alms, do not go about trumpeting it before you; so do the hypocrites, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be glorified (*doxazō*) by men; verily I say unto you, they have already their reward" (Mt 6:2; see also Lk 4:15; Jn 8:54a).

- There is the unique case of “glorify” in John (Mt = 0; Mk = 0; Lk = 0; Jn = 15; Acts = 0), which extends the meaning of glory as an expression of God’s unique quality of being.
 - The object of this glorification is sometimes God the Father (11: 4; 12: 28; 13: 32; 17: 1,4; 21: 19), sometimes Jesus (8: 54; 11: 4; 12: 3; 13: 32; 16: 14; 17: 1,10).
 - Similarly, the source of this glorification is sometimes God (8: 54; 12: 28; 13: 32; 17: 1), sometimes the Spirit (16: 14), sometimes Jesus (17: 4), sometimes an event like Lazarus’ illness (11: 4) or, implicitly, death on the cross (12: 23), sometimes a person like Peter (21: 19).

Only a few details emerge when we try to find out how the glorification takes place:

- the raising of Lazarus reveals Jesus’ quality of being, which in turn reflects on God’s quality of being (11: 4a);
- death freely accepted in love is the way for both Jesus and God to express their quality of being (13: 32), just as it is for Peter to reveal who God is (21: 19);
- by answering the prayer of Christians, Jesus reveals who he is, and through him, reveals who God is (14: 13), just as the role of the Spirit is to continue to reveal who Jesus is (16: 14);
- Jesus revealed God through his works, such as all his healing gestures (17: 4);
- finally, the communion of disciples who welcomed Jesus’ word reveals the very communion between Jesus and his Father (17: 10).

Glorifying becomes in a way synonymous with “revealing”, and ties in with what we said about glory in John, which is a reality that is manifested and contemplated.

- Finally, there is the unique case found only in Acts (Mt = 0; Mk = 0; Lk = 0; Jn = 0; Acts = 1) where “to glorify” means: to be risen up, to be exalted, to enter the divine world: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied before Pilate, even though he was determined to release him” (3, 13).

Let us now return to v. 14. The word “glorify” is linked to the fact that the Spirit of truth will explain things to come, specifically the meaning of the cross, which is the expression of love that goes so far as to give one’s life, reflecting not only Jesus’ love, but also the Father’s love. The word has an apocalyptic meaning, i.e. the revelation of the meaning of things, and more particularly of Jesus’ identity. The original meaning of glory is radiance, but here we’re talking about the radiance of Jesus’ identity, and thus of the Father. It is therefore legitimate to translate the radiance of identity as “extraordinary quality of being”. This is what the Spirit of truth will reveal about Jesus.

- c. Let’s give a final example from Jn 2:11: “As he began signs the Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested the glory of him, and they believed (*pisteuo*) in him the disciples of him”. What does it mean to believe? It’s a word that appears regularly in the Gospels, especially in John: Mt = 11; Mk = 14; Lk = 9; Jn = 98; Acts = 37; 1Jn = 9; 2Jn = 0; 3Jn = 0. In the synoptic narratives, the verb generally means: to trust in someone. This someone can be Jesus (his person, his word, his gospel), John the Baptist, God (in prayer or in Scripture). Only Mark’s appendix hints at the beginning of a technical meaning, where faith becomes faith in the risen Christ.

When we turn to John’s Gospel, certain aspects of faith in the Synoptic Gospels disappear.

- There is no longer a call to believe that Jesus can perform a miracle; rather, faith comes after the miracle: *Jesus said to him, “Go, your son lives.” The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him and went his way* (4:50; see also our scene at Cana: *This was the beginning of the signs that Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee...his disciples believed in him*; see also 2:23; 4:48; 6:30; 7:31; 11:15.45; 12:11; 14:11)
- There is no more faith in John the Baptist; he is only the instrument to bring people to believe in Jesus
- There is no longer a warning against faith in a false Christ

Faith is centered on the very person of Jesus, on his identity. To be more precise,

- To believe is to believe:
 - i. That God sent him (6: 29; 11: 42; 17: 8.21)
 - ii. That Jesus is the Holy One of God (6: 69)
 - iii. That he is the Son of Man (9: 35)
 - iv. That the Father is in him and he is in the Father (10: 38; 14: 10)
 - v. That he is the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world (11: 27)
 - vi. That he is the One who is (13: 19)
 - vii. That he came out of God (16: 27.30)

There is therefore something just in the reproach of the Jews who accuse Jesus of making himself equal to God (5: 8; 10: 33)

- Faith in Jesus seems to have different levels of depth
 - i. There is faith in Jesus as a prophet: *A good many of the Samaritans of that city created in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, "He has told me all that I have done."*, 4:39; this is a good start, but there is much more, as Jesus tells Nathanael: *Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' you believe! You will see even better."* (1: 50)
 - ii. A deeper faith sees him as the savior of the world: *and they (the Samaritans) said to the woman, "It is no longer on your sayings that we believe; we ourselves have heard him and know that he is truly the savior of the world."* (4: 42)
 - iii. Then there is finally the recognition of Jesus' lordship: *Then he (the blind man who was born after being healed) said, "I believe, Lord," and he bowed down to him* (9:38); and there is especially this word of Thomas: *My Lord and my God* (20:28), to whom Jesus said, *Because you see me, you believe. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed* (20: 29)
- The act of believing or not believing is not neutral, it has consequences. The one who believes:
 - i. Becomes a child of God (1: 12)
 - ii. Has eternal life (3: 15-16.36; 5: 24; 6: 40.47; 20: 31)
 - iii. Is not judged (3: 18; 5: 24)
 - iv. Will never be hungry or thirsty (6: 35)
 - v. Will rise again on the last day (6: 40)
 - vi. Will receive the Spirit (7: 39)
 - vii. If he dies, he will live; he has passed from death to life (11: 25; 5: 24)
 - viii. Will never die (11: 26)
 - ix. Will see the glory of God (11: 40)
 - x. Becomes a son of light (12: 36)
 - xi. Believe also in Him who sent him (12: 44)
 - xii. Do not remain in darkness (12: 46)
 - xiii. Will do the same works as Jesus, and even greater ones (14: 12)

He who does not believe:

- i. Is already judged (3: 18)
 - ii. Shall not see life and the wrath of God is upon him (3: 36)
 - iii. Is guilty of a sin and will die in his sin (16: 8-9; 8: 24)
- The very fact that some believe and others do not creates a division, a separation, a schism (*So there was a split in the crowd because of him, 7:43; And there was a split among them, 9:16; Again there was a split among the Jews because of these words, 10:19*).

On the one hand, there are those who believe:

- i. His disciples believe in him (2:11)
- ii. In Jerusalem many believed in him because of the signs he did (2: 23)
- iii. A good number of Samaritans believe in him (4: 39)
- iv. In the crowd that listened to him in the temple at the Feast of Tabernacles, many believed in him (7: 31; 8: 30)
- v. The healed blind man believes in him (9: 38)
- vi. Those who knew John the Baptist and his baptism believe in him (10: 40-42)
- vii. Many Jews who witnessed the raising of Lazarus believe in him (11: 45)
- viii. Some of the public figures believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not declare themselves for fear of being excluded from the synagogue (12: 42)

On the other hand, there are those who do not believe:

- i. The Jews who hear the discourse on the bread of life do not believe in him (6: 36)
 - ii. Judas does not believe in him (6: 64)
 - iii. His brothers do not believe in him (7: 5)
 - iv. The nobles and the Pharisees do not believe in him (7: 48)
 - v. The Jews who heard him at the feast of the Dedication did not believe in him and even wanted to stone him (10: 25.31)
 - vi. The chief priests and the Pharisees were moved by the number of those who believed in him and resolved in council to kill him (11: 53)
 - vii. The crowd that heard him speak of the death of the Son of Man six days before the Passover did not believe in him (12: 37)
- For people to believe, certain conditions are necessary
 - i. One must not seek the glory that comes from men, but that which comes from God (5: 44)
 - ii. One must believe in the Scriptures and in Moses (interpret them well), because they speak of Jesus (5: 45-47)

- iii. One must be seekers of truth (8: 44-46)
- iv. One must be of God (8: 47)
- v. One must be of the sheep that listen to his voice, because God has given them to Jesus (10: 26-29)

So we understand that for John, the act of believing is not optional, but vital, and is the very reason why he wrote his gospel.

Here, v. 11, which concludes the Marriage at Cana, confirms that in John, the “miracle”, presented as a “sign”, is what arouses faith, and not the other way round, as in the Synoptics. This faith is a recognition of Jesus’ identity, his being of an exceptional quality, called “glory”, a quality he derives from God himself. Thus, for John, from the very beginning of his ministry, the disciples recognized Jesus’ unique identity.

6. Establishing the final editor's intention in the community context

- A. [Mark](#)
 - 1. [Community features](#)
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- B. [Matthew](#)
 - 1. [Community features](#)
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- D. [John](#)
 - 1. [Community features](#)
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The aim of biblical analysis, with the help of the historical-critical method, is to answer the question: what did the evangelist, or more precisely the final writer, want to say? To answer this question properly, we need to assume the following: the final writer was primarily addressing a particular Christian community, even if the work had a universal aim. When we analyze a Gospel closely, we realize that its insistence, the questions raised and the approach adopted can only really be explained in the context of a specific community with its own characteristics, demographics and problems. For example, why does Mark have to explain the rites of Jewish ritual purity, while Matthew has no need to do so? Why is Mark the only one to address the case of a wife who repudiates her husband, something unthinkable in Jewish circles, and why is Matthew the only one to admit an exception to the prohibition of divorce? We must admit, then, that a gospel is a catechetical and pastoral work, addressed primarily to a particular community. So our final step in biblical analysis is to take everything we’ve learned in the previous steps and situate it in a particular community.

Now comes the question: What is the community associated with each evangelist? Where can we find a description of such a community? The simple answer is: in the gospel itself. Isn't this a vicious circle? In fact, it's only with the passage of time and analysis that we learn to spot the distinctive features of an evangelist, in terms of his style and vocabulary, of course, but above all what characterizes his approach, the list of issues he raises, what he presupposes of his audience, the features of his theology. Biblical scholars have long been interested in the *Sitz im leben*, i.e. to the life situation implied in a gospel. Even if there is no complete consensus on the subject, a good number of biblical scholars nevertheless agree on the living environment presupposed by the four Gospels.

- A. Mark
 - 1. Community features

At the end of the 2nd century, Clement of Alexandria cites Rome as the place where Mark wrote his Gospel. Today, we can say that there is a consensus among biblical scholars on this subject. For Clement of Alexandria’s assertion is confirmed by a number of features found in the Gospel according to Mark (on the subject, see R. Brown, [Gospel according to Mark](#), in [An Introduction to the New Testament](#)).

- a. Let’s start by noting that the Roman milieu of the first century was a bilingual one, where both Greek and Latin were spoken. The elite made a point of knowing Greek for life in society, and Greek was essential for international trade, while Latin was useful for a career in the military, law or the civil service. Early Roman emperors were bilingual. For example, Emperor Claudius (emperor from 41 to 54) sometimes addressed the Roman Senate in both languages, especially in the presence of foreign ambassadors, Suetonius tells us, referring to “our two languages” ([The Life of Claudius](#), 42).
- b. Since Mark writes his gospel in Greek, we can assume that his audience understood that language. But his vocabulary is peppered with words of Latin origin: *legiōn* (“legion”) in 5, 9.15; *dēnariōn* (“denarius”) in 6, 37; 12, 15; 14, 5; *kentyriōn* (“centurion”) in 15, 39. A coin like the *kodrantēs* (Latin: *quadrans*) in 12: 42 didn’t exist anywhere but in the West, especially Rome. In addition, Mark uses Latinisms, i.e. Latin expressions with Greek

words, such as *hodon poiein* (“make way”) in 2:23, a Latinism for *iter facere* (“make way”, i.e. walk); or: *to hikanon poiēsai* (“make sufficient”) in 15:15 a Latinism for *satisfacere* (“to satisfy”). Finally, note that when Mark speaks of this woman from the region of Tyre whose daughter is possessed by an unclean spirit, he describes her as a Syrophenician, an expression in use in Rome (Matthew speaks of a Canaanite woman instead).

- c. By locating this community in Rome, we exclude a Palestinian *sitz im leben*, or at least a predominantly Jewish milieu. On the one hand, Mark has to translate into Greek the Aramaic words present in his Gospel, such as *Ephphata* (open up), *Elôî* (my God), *lema sabachthani* (why have you forsaken me), *korban* (sacred offering), *Talitha koum* (girl, get up). On the other hand, he has to explain certain Jewish customs that at least part of his community is unaware of, such as purification practices (7:3-4).
- d. But the most important thing to note is that this community is facing the persecution of Nero (emperor from 54 to 68), which will begin after the burning of Rome in July 64. Let's start by recalling the events. On July 19, 64, at the eastern end of the Great Circus - not far from the Jewish quarter at the Porta Capena - a formidable fire broke out, which the axes and buckets of seven vigil cohorts, each with a thousand men, were unable to put out until six days later. Of Rome's fourteen regions, four remained intact, three were burnt to the ground, and the remaining seven offered little more than the remnants of ruined and half-burnt buildings. In this terrifying inferno, many of the city's one million inhabitants had lost everything; many had perished in the flames. Who was responsible for the catastrophe? Here's what the Roman historian Tacitus wrote on the subject:

Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess. And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed. (*Annals*, 15, 44, from *Complete Works of Tacitus*. Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodrick, Sara Bryant, edited for Perseus. New York. : Random House, Inc.).

So, to allay suspicions, Nero used the Christians as scapegoats. The persecution would be terrible, accentuated by an atmosphere of jealousy (see 1 Clement 5:2-7), denunciation and betrayal of one another.

- e. Mark's Gospel would have been completed just a few years after this persecution, around the years 67 to 70. This would explain the dark atmosphere of the Gospel, with its emphasis on persecution, suffering and death. Some have said that this gospel is above all an account of Jesus' passion, accompanied by a long introduction (of the 11,133 words of the original gospel that end with the fear of women, 3,998 words belong to Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, i.e. 36%). The structure of the gospel reflects this perspective. According to John, Jesus went to Jerusalem several times. So why doesn't Mark mention these multiple trips to Jerusalem, but instead concentrates all Jesus' activity in Galilee, and his only trip to Jerusalem is to die there? This is not a “historical” plan, but a “theological” one, in which, having made known the power of God's reign at work in his action and teaching to all the people, and having associated his disciples with it, he accepts to face suffering and death. This plan expresses the Christian way, and constitutes a teaching for this suffering community in Rome.
- f. All this would go some way to explaining the insistence of Mark's Jesus on secrecy about his actions, in order to avoid misunderstanding about his identity: for we can only truly understand who the Messiah is after witnessing his suffering, and resurrection necessarily involves death. All this would explain Mark's portrayal of the twelve apostles, in which he emphasizes their difficulty in believing, their incomprehension, their flight from Gethsemane: all in all, they are not so different from the Christians of Rome. All this could explain the finale of his original gospel, which ends with the fear of women, a fear that would reflect what was happening in the Roman community?

- g. It's easy to imagine the drama of this community. Freshly baptized, believing in the transforming power of the risen Jesus, hoping for his imminent return, how could they understand what was happening to them: Nero's terrible persecution and all those apostasies? Would this explain their overheated expectation of an imminent parousia (see Mark 13): for their whole world was collapsing, and this community could only look forward to the new world promised by Jesus.
2. Pericope readings in the context of this community
- a. Mk 12:38-44: the hypocritical scribes and the poor widow

This pericope comprises two distinct sections: the first deals with the scribes who strut about the public square, seeking first places, hypocritically pretending to pray long hours while devouring widows' possessions; the second section contrasts a poor widow who deposits a few coins in the temple treasury.

Mark probably has at hand a tradition in which Jesus would have denounced the attitude of the learned of the time, who were also Bible scholars, people who had many social pretensions and considered themselves apart from others, who wore various religious signs to display their piety, but all this was at odds with what they were doing: there was no sincerity in what they were doing, and even at the limit, they could be swindlers. It's possible that this tradition reflects several of Jesus' interventions during his ministry. In any case, Mark decided to take up this tradition and insert it at the point where, in his narrative, the bridges are cut with the religious authorities, as a form of conclusion and judgment towards them. Through the crowd listening to Jesus on the temple forecourt, Mark sees the Christian community, in particular the educated elite, and intends to warn them of a similar attitude of hypocrisy. Jesus will no longer be there to guide them every day. Christians need to remember his teachings.

Mark has chosen to follow this warning against the scribes with the story of a poor widow who makes an offering in the temple. The language of this story does not belong to Mark's usual language, and is probably not a story he created. We don't know when this scene may have taken place, according to tradition. But Mark chose to insert it just after the warning against the scribes. Why was this? It has already been pointed out that the hook-word "widow" may have played a role, since the preceding narrative spoke of the scribes devouring the houses of widows. But there's certainly more to it than that, as this is the last scene before the long apocalyptic discourse and the actual account of his trial and death. What's more, Jesus takes the trouble to have his disciples come to him to offer a teaching: he intends to deliver a fundamental message, not a little moral reading.

First of all, the scene of the hypocritical scribes, who enrich themselves at the expense of the widows, and that of the widow, who gives all she has to live, must be read together, as a striking contrast; there could be no greater antithesis, no more opposite paths. And just as Jesus passed judgment on the hypocritical elite, he also passes judgment on the widow: she has given the greatest gift possible. In Mark's construction, there is an invitation to follow the widow's path. And for the community in Rome, who have lost everything in the persecution, there is the consolation of knowing that they have chosen the widow's path.

But there's something even deeper. For this scene around the widow shortly precedes the whole story of Jesus' trial and death. Mark, a fine storyteller, loves characters who embody various aspects of Jesus' life and that of the Christian community. For example, in Jericho, the blind Bartimaeus, who finally sees clearly and decides to follow Jesus on the road to Jerusalem, and therefore the road to death, represents this Christian community which, with the eyes of faith, is able to follow its Master on this difficult road. Now, this widow who is capable of stripping herself of everything, even what is necessary to live, represents both the path of Jesus who accepts to strip himself of everything, including his own life, and who will be represented by a naked body on the cross, and the path of the Christians of Rome who will be disinherited and killed. Mark's approach to his persecuted community is not to soften the blow, but to make sense of what they have to go through. And finding that meaning will enable this community to face events head on.

- b. Mk 6: 1-6: Jesus in Nazareth in his own milieu

The context is that of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, where he is confronted above all with his own people. Our pericope is particularly an inclusion with 3:31-35, where Jesus asserts that his true kinsmen are those who listen to him and do God's will, staring at his audience as he is told that his mother and brothers are banging on the door to see him. Now Jesus is teaching in the synagogue of Nazareth, the place where he was brought up, and the people are shocked; they say, "Where did he get this? What is this wisdom given to him, and how are these miracles performed by his hands? Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Jose, Jude and Simon? Do not his sisters live here among us?" And Mark concludes: they didn't believe in him, and Jesus couldn't perform any miracles there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.

Why does Mark insist on the lack of faith of Jesus' immediate family? We know that, after Easter, the Christian community in Jerusalem enjoyed a high reputation, especially with stalwarts like James, Jesus' brother, perceived as rather conservative. After his conversion, Paul found it important to go and meet him. And it's possible that Jude's epistle echoes the thoughts of Jude, another of Jesus' brothers. Mark's approach has the effect of relativizing these blood ties and the reputation of the Jerusalem community, and contrasts it with the fundamental value of faith. Thus, the community of Rome would have nothing to envy that of Jerusalem. But

above all, blood ties serve no purpose, which means that any true relationship with Jesus, and access to the power of the risen Jesus, is based on faith. This is a message for a community that feels persecuted and isolated, and thinks it would be different if Jesus were physically present.

What's more, the very fact that Mark insists on the presence of the disciples accompanying him makes this scene a teaching for the disciples, and therefore for the Christian community. Indeed, when Mark writes: "And Jesus said to **them** that a prophet is not esteemed except in his own country, and in his own kindred, and in his own house", the word "them" refers to the disciples. It is they who must understand that, without faith, blood ties are worthless. Jesus then sends them out on mission to continue his work.

The question of faith is at the heart of the story. When Mark presents us with a Jesus who is astonished at their lack of faith and insists that Jesus is becoming almost powerless under the circumstances, just after the extraordinary scenes of faith of the hemorrhoid and Jairus, he is saying this: faith is the key to life. If we except the Gospel according to John, it is the one that uses the verb "to believe" the most (Mt = 11; Mk = 14; Lk = 9; Jn = 98). This is all the more important for a persecuted community. Let's recall an earlier scene in which the disciples wake Jesus in the boat, where they fear perishing, and Jesus replies: "Why are you so afraid? How can you have no faith?" (Mk 4:40). You can't get through difficult times without faith. And in the past, people may have experienced physical closeness to Jesus, and even blood ties, but none of this came to anything unless they were willing to believe in him.

B. Matthew

1. Community features

Most biblical scholars link Matthew to Syria, and specifically to Antioch (on this subject, see R.E. Brown, [Gospel according to Matthew](#), in [An Introduction to the New Testament](#)) and J.P. Meier, [Antioch](#), in [Antioch and Rome](#). One clue comes from the addition of the word "Syria" in Mt 4:24, when Matthew copies Mark's text on the spread of Jesus' activity. Another clue comes from the use twenty-six times in the Gospel of the word "city", against four of the word "village", suggesting an important city in Syria; and Antioch was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire. Finally, Ignatius of Antioch and the *Didache* (associated with Antioch) provide the earliest evidence of knowledge of the Gospel according to Matthew. In addition to these external clues, we can add internal ones.

These internal clues first answer the question: what was the composition of the community? Jewish converts to the Christian faith certainly played a major role. Matthew, for example, does not need to explain to his audience the Jewish practices surrounding ritual purification (Mt 15:1-20). Moses and the Jewish Law remain important. Matthew presents five major speeches by Jesus, which seem to follow the five-book structure of the Torah or Jewish Law. And Jesus' first discourse containing the charter of the Christian life takes place on a mountain, an echo of Sinai where Moses received the tablets of the Law. Matthew is careful to put into Jesus' mouth: "Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets..." (Mt 5:17). And when Matthew's Jesus says: "You have heard that it was said to our ancestors..." (5:21,27,33), this presupposes a Jewish audience. And a phrase like "I (Jesus) was sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel" (Mt 15:24; see also Mt 10:5-6) is understandable and acceptable only to a Jewish audience.

Yet other clues point to the presence of Christian converts from paganism. This should come as no surprise. Flavius Josephus ([Jewish War](#) 7.3.3; #45) tells us that the ceremonies of the Jews of Antioch attracted many Gentiles. So it's not surprising that, when the Hellenistic Jewish Christians were dispersed from Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom (c. 36: Acts 8:1) and came to Antioch, they spoke of Christ to the Gentiles there too (Acts 11:19-20). The list of Antioch's "prophets and teachers" (Acts 13:1: early 40s?) includes a childhood companion of Herod Antipas, so the Christian community there may have included some prestigious and wealthy individuals. Paul's letter to the Galatians (2:12), written around the year 53 or 54, tells us that in Antioch, Christians of Jewish and pagan origin shared the same Eucharistic table. And it was the Antioch church that commissioned Paul's first mission to the Gentiles. When Matthew concludes his gospel, he sends his apostles to all nations (Mt 28:19).

Beyond the composition of the community, what can we learn about its situation? Several clues point to a number of tensions. Firstly, there were tensions within the Jewish community, between Christian Jews and non-Christian Jews. Luke tells us that it was here, in Antioch, that Jesus' disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). This means that the disciples of Jesus, who were Jews from Antioch, were distinguished from other Jews, perhaps appearing as a sect of Judaism. The tension between the two Jewish communities was to increase with the Jewish revolt (66-70). There, in Antioch, Jewish antipathy for Christian Jews increased as the latter did not support their fellow Jews in the revolt. In the 70s, after the first Jewish revolt had been crushed by the Romans, the leading forces of Judaism gathered in Jamnea, on the Palestinian coast, to form an academy of scholars and write down their religious heritage; they were close to Pharisaic thought and honored as rabbis. While Christian Jews continued to frequent the synagogue for some time, tensions turned to conflict with their non-Christian brethren. According to Mt 10:17 (see also Mt 23:34), some Christians are scourged in the synagogues. In Mt 23:2-3, Matthew warns his community against the scribes and Pharisees who succeeded Moses, that while we must observe what they say, we must not do what they do. When referring to the synagogues, the expression "their synagogue or synagogues" is used; when referring to the rumor of the theft of Jesus' body, Matthew writes: "This story has spread among the Jews to this day". Thus, the Jews and their synagogues have become another reality. This language of alienation suggests a

separation from Judaism on the part of Jewish Christians who, together with Gentile Christians, formed a self-subsistent church.

Within the Antioch Church itself, however, there was considerable tension. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians (ch. 2), gives us an echo of this tension as conservative Christians from Jerusalem, in particular James, the brother of Jesus, and his entourage arrived in Antioch to impose stricter observance of Jewish laws. While this Church of Antioch had initially sponsored Paul's first missionary journey to the Gentiles, a group from the same Church later set out to destroy Paul's teaching, as it promoted too much freedom from Jewish customs. This tension can be seen in Matthew's Gospel. First of all, the evangelist seems to be addressing those who want to free themselves from all laws, perhaps certain Christians of pagan origin or very liberal Jews who misunderstood the "Christian freedom" of which Paul speaks: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... Whoever therefore violates one of these least precepts, and teaches others to do the same, will be held to be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 5:17-19). For without landmarks, without identity, some Christians seem to have lost the breath of their origins, especially considering that the promise of Jesus' return does not seem to be coming true: "As a result of the increasing absence of law, love will grow cold among the many" (Mt 24:12). On the other hand, Matthew also seems to be addressing the conservative Jews in his community: "If your righteousness does not surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees..." (Mt 5:20). He also addresses them when he talks about certain Jewish practices: "When you give something to a poor person... When you pray... When you fast..." (Mt 6:5-18). Matthew reserves the harshest words for the scribes and Pharisees, with whom the conservative members of the community had a certain kinship of spirit: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites..." (Mt 23:13,15,23,25,27,29). And the renewal of Judaism in Jamnea, where rabbinism was developing, may have exerted a certain influence on some Christian Jews, leading Matthew to write: "But do not call yourselves 'rabbi', for you are all equal and have only one teacher. Do not call anyone on earth your 'father', for you have only one father, he who is in heaven. Nor call anyone on earth your 'guide', for you have only one guide, Christ." (Mt 23:8-10).

Finally, Peter and James were very present in Antioch. Peter appears more often in this Gospel (14:28-31; 16:17-19; 17:24-27) than in any other; and to the list of the Twelve taken from Mark, Mt 10:2 adds "first" before Peter's name, making Peter the foundation of the Church (Mt 16:18). This is the expression of a highly structured vision of the community, which finds its logical evolution with Bishop Ignatius of Antioch (35 - 108 CE), who develops the roles of deacon, priest and bishop, taking up the structure of the Jerusalem temple: Levite, Priest, High Priest. In addition, processes were developed for settling certain problems, the beginnings of canon law, such as that concerning community conflicts (Mt 18:15-18).

2. Pericope readings in the context of this community

a. Mt 2: 1-12: The Magi Come to Pay Homage to the King of the Jew

(For a detailed analysis, please refer to R.E. Brown, [The Birth of the Messiah](#). *Book One: The Matthean Infancy Narrative*, p. 45-232).

The story of the Magi is inspired by the story of Balaam (Num 22 - 24), who arrived from the East, considered a magus and a pagan, who predicted that a star would rise in Israel, a royal leader. This story, written by an anonymous Christian, tells of magi from the East (which can be identified with Arabia), considered wise men and astrologers, who associated, as was customary at the time, the appearance of a new star with the birth of an important figure. They wanted to pay tribute to this royal figure. Why are they heading for Judea? Assume that the new star appeared in the constellation of Pisces in the zodiac, associated with the Hebrews. This star will lead them to Bethlehem, much as the pillar of fire illuminated the people of Israel by night on their march to the promised land. Once in front of the child, they will pay him royal homage.

For Matthew, this story is important because it represents the history of a part of his community, people who came from paganism and welcomed the good news of the risen Jesus. They didn't have Scripture to guide them towards welcoming the Messiah, but simply the observation of nature. But Matthew also sees in this the fulfillment of what the prophet Isaiah (60) and Ps 72 had foretold for the end of time, when pagan kings from the East would come to Jerusalem to acknowledge the good news of the God of Israel, bringing their precious products, gold for the temple building, incense for worship. So he modifies the narrative to insert this allusion to Isaiah and Ps 72.

How was Matthew's catechesis received by his community, as described above? Let's not forget that while Christians of Jewish origin made up a large part of the community, there was also a significant group of Gentile origin, and throughout the history of this community in the first century there were tensions. So the story of the Magi consolidates the place of Christians of pagan origin: the story of the Magi anticipated their coming to faith. There are many paths to the Messiah, and one of these paths was based on the science of nature (as Paul would develop in his epistle to the Romans), so there was not only the path of Scripture. Moreover, the Jewish authorities who knew Scripture did not open up to the good news; they even became adversaries. For Christians of Jewish origin in the community, they could see in the opposition of Herod and the chief priests a reflection of the present situation, when they had just been excluded from the synagogue by their Jewish confreres; so the present situation had already been anticipated at the time of Jesus as a child.

Matthew's catechesis is addressed to Christians of both Jewish and non-Jewish origin. On the one hand, it justifies Jesus messiahship by his birth in Bethlehem, the birthplace of King David and the place from which the prophet predicted the messiah would come. And on the other hand, the presence of all these Christians of pagan origin in the community actualizes what the prophets of old had foreseen for the end of time, when they visualized the arrival in Jerusalem of these pagan kings from Arabia to celebrate the salvation offered by the God of Israel, bringing with them what they had most precious for the service of worship; the new worship is now the risen Christ. And in this, Jesus is the son of Abraham, in whom the nations of the earth will be blessed.

The story of the Magi also anticipates the way Matthew now conceives the Christian mission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt 28:19).

b. Mt 14: 22-33: Jesus' walk on water

Much of Matthew's narrative is provided by Mark. But on the one hand, the story takes on a new color for his Antioch audience, given its situation. On the other hand, Matthew's own alterations give a certain orientation to his catechesis.

The story of the walking on the water is inseparable from that of the multiplication of the loaves, and the way this story is written clearly refers to the Christian Eucharistic assembly. Our story begins with the sending away of those who have been satiated: the meal is over, and it's time to part. Jesus is presented as the one who forces this separation. Why is this so? For the author of the story, this separation is the death of Jesus, and in faith, this death is not simply an accident, but part of God's plan, a plan that Jesus fully assumed. By his choice, Jesus in a way obliges us to live without him. He has returned to his Father, symbolized here by the mountain and the moment of prayer alone. On the other hand, he has given us a rendezvous "on the other side". What is this "other side"? For Christian communities like Matthew's, it was clearly the return of the risen Jesus, the moment when we can experience his presence once again. Matthew insists on two things: this separation was voluntarily assumed, for it is "by himself" that Jesus ascends the mountain; and this separation raises Jesus' true transcendence, for "he is there alone", a place inaccessible to human beings. This is part of Matthew's "high" theology.

"The boat was already several stadia from land". For Matthew's community, this must have had a very clear meaning: we have been separated from Jesus of Nazareth for some time, and he no longer walks among us. This separation is frightening. He's no longer there to guide us every step of the way, to direct us, to be our "rabbi".

"The boat was troubled by the waves, for the wind was contrary". In Mark, it's the disciples who are tormented by rowing. Here, it's the boat that's tormented, i.e. the ecclesial community. It is tormented by the waves, which represent the forces of evil in all its forms. With the knowledge we have of Matthew's community, by what waves is it tormented? They are probably being tormented by the external forces of their Jewish brethren, who want to exclude them from the synagogue, or have already done so. This conflict was bound to have repercussions on social and family life. The community is probably also tormented by internal rifts, between conservatives who hold to the status quo, to the application of all Jewish rules, and those who believe that Christian freedom frees them from all rules, who perhaps frequented the markets offering those meats that had been sacrificed in pagan temples, throwing their brothers into disarray. The community is probably also tormented by the pretensions of several Christian leaders who are more in search of authority and prestige than motivated by pastoral concern and the desire to serve. All this threatens the community's survival.

"(At) the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea". In essentially repeating Mark, Matthew assumes the meaning he finds in his story. The fourth watch of the night is the dawn, and for a Christian, it's a reference to the resurrection of Jesus, and a reference to the return of the risen Jesus at the end of time; let's not forget that for the first Christian generations, this end of time was expected very soon. So we understand that at dawn, Jesus makes his presence felt. But what's really special is that Jesus makes his presence felt by walking on the sea. The author of the story is well aware that no one can walk on water, but he refers to several Old Testament passages about God the Creator who is master of his creation, in particular Job 9:8 (*"He (God) alone has spread out the heavens; he walks on the sea as on solid ground"*). To ensure that his audience makes the connection with this passage from Job, he modifies a detail of Mark's text: as Mark's Greek expression "on the sea" is a genitive (noun complement), he will transform it into an accusative (direct object complement), since the expression "on the sea" in the Septuagint text of Job is an accusative (direct object complement). What's more, by doing so, he will make the walk on the sea more dynamic than in Mark's account; for with his noun complement, Mark only answers the question: Where is Jesus? On the sea. Matthew's direct object complement answers the question: What is Jesus doing? He tramples on the sea, as God does in Job. Thus, the risen Jesus shares God's attribute of dominating the forces of evil, which the Jewish world associates with the sea and the waves. And for Matthew, these forces of evil refer to everything that threatens the survival of the community.

"When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were shocked, saying that it was a ghost, and they cried out in fear". This upheaval is due to fear. Why was this? The answer given is surprising: the disciples believe they see a ghost. How should we interpret this answer? We have to assume that Mark, if he is the author of this sentence as copied by Matthew, did not intend to create a children's story, or even to amuse himself, even if throughout his gospel he proves to be an excellent storyteller; his purpose was above all catechetical. The only Old Testament reference to *phantasma* (ghost) is in Wis 17:14-15, which speaks of ghosts in Sheol: for the Jews, the dead were

in Sheol, leading a vegetative life and looking like spectres or shadows. In the Greek world, people spoke of Hades or the "underworld". It's possible that it's such a specter that Mark wants to evoke, taken up by Matthew. Let's remember that the context suggests two things: firstly, the boat is in peril, so death is in the prowl, and secondly, there is a lack of faith. In this context, the specter could evoke Sheol, and the disciples are facing the shadow of death, their own death. So, rather than seeing the risen Jesus associated with God who controls the forces of evil, they consider the prospect of the fate that awaits them and may have been that of Jesus, joining Hades. There's plenty to be afraid of. Mark and Matthew could probably identify certain members of the community in this behavior.

"Then immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying: take courage! I am! Do not be afraid!" Matthew essentially repeats Mark's text. The important thing is to remember how Jesus identifies himself: by his word. It's not by seeing him or touching him that we know it's Jesus; we hear his word. First of all, we need to group together "take courage" and "do not be afraid", because one cannot be separated from the other. Indeed, "take courage" means "have confidence". And "to be afraid" is the opposite of faith: to believe is not to be afraid, but to move forward confidently. So "take courage" and "have no fear" form an inclusion whose center, and therefore the key to interpretation, is: "I am". Now, the expression "I am" without any attribute is typical in Jewish circles for designating God's very being, and Isaiah will put the following words into God's mouth: "I, I am, I am who comforts you; who are you to fear mortal man, the son of man doomed to the fate of grass?" (51:12). It is now Jesus who takes up these words, who asks us not to be afraid. For to believe that he is risen is not simply to affirm that he is alive, it is to affirm that he is able, like God, to intervene against the forces of evil. Such a word is addressed to Matthew's torn community, a community in search of an identity, a community that must have felt in some way weakened.

Now, with vv. 28-31, Matthew departs from Mark to add a "sub-narrative" of his own, featuring Peter. Why does this happen? One possible reason concerns the leaders of the community, in whom we detect a certain amount of tension: when one seeks titles like "rabbi" or "father" or "doctor" (see Mt 23:8-10 where Jesus prohibit these titles used by Jewish leaders), one is no longer motivated by the desire to serve, and one has certainly lost sight of the gospel message. It's probably for them that Matthew has written this short account of Peter, the representative of the disciples, who has spent a long time in Antioch, and is therefore the image of all community leaders. For Peter wants to follow in Jesus' footsteps, and so, like him, he wants to be able to trample down and dominate the forces of evil. But these forces are so strong that he no longer has the faith to keep going. The reproach "[you are] of little faith, why did you doubt?" is addressed to many leaders in the community. Leadership is based on faith, and if we don't have that mountain-moving faith, we'll fail in our role. But there's good news: Jesus is always there to come to the rescue of our little faith.

"And when they got into the boat, the wind died down". Matthew picks up the thread of Mark's narrative here, except that he has to take into account that two characters get into the boat ("them"): Peter and Jesus. Even if this is not explicitly stated, we must assume that the disciples have regained their faith. In the story of Jonah, where the sea is raging and the boat in peril, the sea calms down when the sailors begin to pray. Here, Jesus does not perform an exorcism to ask the sea to calm down, as in the story of the stilled storm (Mk 4:35-41 || Mt 8:18.23-27; Lk 8:22-25). This faith is proclaimed in the next verse. It is faith, then, that enables us to live the rest of the voyage "calmly". We may think that the waves will continue to batter the boat, but the state of mind will be one of confidence that the boat's voyage will succeed, for the risen Jesus is with the community in this difficult battle against evil.

"Then those in the boat prostrated themselves [before] him, saying: Truly, of God the Son you are". It's remarkable that Matthew has left out Mark's finale to the story, in which the disciples are at a loss to understand, due to their lack of faith, a reflection of the Roman community in disarray in the face of persecution. For Matthew, the disciples have finally come to faith, and he presents us with their solemn profession. First, they prostrate themselves, a gesture of recognition of authority and veneration. Then they proclaim him "Son of God", the messiah who has been faithful to God's will, and who now has authority over the forces of evil, beginning with death. This profession of faith is similar to that of the centurion and the Roman guards at Jesus' death, but Matthew insists on putting it into the mouths of the disciples long before Jesus' death. He wants his community to identify with this profession of faith, and asks each member to take it to heart. This is the essential condition for its survival, and will enable it to continue its long journey into the night.

It's time to conclude. Our story began with the multiplication of the loaves, that memorable moment of intimacy with Jesus when he feeds us all. Matthew's audience saw it as the Eucharistic gathering. Now it's time to leave (*ita missa est*), time to face up to everyday life and experience both separation from the Eucharistic community, and separation from Jesus' sense of presence. And it's Jesus who forces them into this separation: it's time for mission, and mission is not optional. For the members of Matthew's community, these are difficult times of confrontation with their Jewish brethren, of communal tensions between conservators and liberals, of friction with the various community leaders. Will the ecclesiastical boat sink? The spectre of communal death frightens everyone. It's time to go back to our roots, to remember the word of Jesus, who assured us of his presence and support, and who, risen from the dead, can say like God: I am, and therefore is able to dominate, control and trample on evil. This road of life after the warm gathering of the Eucharist is also a difficult one for the leaders of the community, for if they do not have a faith to move mountains, they will drown in the forces of evil. Our story ends with a surge of hope and faith, proclaiming total faith in the risen Jesus, master of the forces of evil and death.

c. Mt 5:13-16: You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world

Having taken up the Q Document presenting Jesus' teaching on the Beatitudes, an exposé of the fundamental attitude expected of the Christian, Matthew now sets out to make explicit the whole program of Christian action in this great inaugural discourse of Jesus. This great discourse is aimed at both those who insist on a strict application of the Law and those who have abandoned it all. Remember that in Judaism, the emphasis is on orthopraxy (right action), not orthodoxy (right thinking). And Matthew, this Jew turned Christian, intends to present Jesus in this first great discourse as the new Moses, the new law.

But before explaining the details of Christian action in concrete terms, Matthew makes a point of explaining its fundamental motivation: Christian action has a missionary function. To do this, he draws on material he finds in Mark in another context, on the Q Document (which seems to be a kind of ring-book of Jesus' sayings), and on other elements of tradition found in the first epistle of Peter and Justin, for example. And so he calls out to his community: "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world; this is your identity, you cannot escape it".

Taking up the image of salt, which in ancient times could play a variety of roles (giving taste to food, preserving it, as well as serving as a fertilizer for cultivation with manure, and a catalyst for furnaces), he first targets those who have lost their Christian breath, if not their faith, and so, like salt that has lost its properties, they have become "crazy". This loss of identity has consequences: as the salt is no longer needed and thrown out of the house, these Christians are threatened with excommunication, i.e., being thrown out of the community as "dead" Christians.

After this negative warning, Matthew takes a position that at first glance seems more positive, with the image of the light of the world. For him, the entire teaching of Jesus, and in particular the Beatitudes, is the unique wisdom that the world needs and that can truly enlighten it. And Christians are the bearers of this light insofar as they live it out through their actions. To express this point, he turns to a passage from Isaiah (2:2), which gives us his vision of the messianic times when the city of Jerusalem will become the focal point of the nations, not only because it is situated on a mountain, but also because it is there that the house of God and his Law are to be found, and thus that light capable of illuminating the universe. But for Matthew, the messianic times have arrived, and the new Jerusalem is the Christian community, which has received the teaching of the Beatitudes and is the repository of this light for the enlightenment of the nations. At the same time, Matthew takes this text from Isaiah in a different direction: rather than being a celebration of the greatness of God's plan and of his people, he uses the image of the city on a mountain in a negative way: just as the city cannot go unnoticed, so the Christian cannot shirk his mission.

After this negative approach, Matthew turns to a positive one, in which he clarifies his expectations. To do this, he uses the image of the lamp provided by Mark and the Q Document. The idea behind the image of the lamp is that it must be well located and clearly visible if it is to do its job. So he takes up the text of Mk 4:21 about the lamp that must not be put under a bushel, a sort of conical-shaped piece of furniture, a text that he connects with the image of the light and the city on a mountain, using the conjunction "nor" ("cannot be hidden nor...") and the verb "to light" (Mark has "comes" to say: does a lamp come...?). And after mentioning where the lamp should not be, he uses the Q Document (of which Lk 11:33 is the best witness) to say where it should be: but on the lampstand. Finally, Matthew repeats the consequences mentioned by the Q Document, but is more explicit about the fact that those who are illuminated are the people in the house, and above all uses the verb "to shine" to bridge the gap with the conclusion that follows.

After the development of this mini parable or comparison, comes its application or conclusion: thus (*houtōs*). For this part, Matthew seems to have recourse to a tradition echoed in the first epistle of Peter and Justin: "Then let your good works shine before men, so that when they see them, they may admire your Father in heaven". Talk of glorifying or admiring God is not typical of Matthew. So we have to admit that he seems here to have reused a tradition that is also known to the author of the first letter of Peter and Justin. This allows him to affirm, firstly, that it is through his actions that the Christian shines and becomes a light for others, a rather Jewish attitude. Secondly, he makes explicit the fundamental motivation: to make God known, for it is He who has acted through them; to shine, to do good are not a way of self-promotion, but a way of revealing who God is.

Who is intended by such an exhortation, which begins with a warning against losing one's identity, as with salt, and being excluded from the community, an exhortation which continues with the fact that one cannot shirk one's mission, like the city on the mountain, and that one must become visible through one's good deeds like a well-placed lamp in order to be seen and to enlighten others, so that humanity will be able to see God's merciful action in them? It's easy to imagine that it's the Christians in the community who have lost their impetus and misunderstand the role they can play. So, before illustrating what he means by good deeds (5:21 - 7:27), Matthew was keen to explain their importance and role.

Of course, he is primarily addressing "lukewarm" Christians. But in the following verses (5:17-20), he addresses the "fundamentalists" of the community, those conservatives who hold to the letter of the Law.

C. Luke

1. Community features

Where the Gospel according to Luke was written (on this subject, consult R.E. Brown, [Gospel according to Luke](#), in [Introduction to the New Testament](#) and my paper [Where was Luke's Gospel written?](#) of which I have taken up several elements in the following presentation)? According to external data, Luke was a companion of Paul, and this suggests that his two books, the Gospel and Acts, were addressed to the churches born of the Pauline mission. But a more precise clue comes from a prologue to Luke's Gospel, described as anti-Marcionite and dated between 150 and 255. It reads:

"This is a certain Luke, a Syrian from Antioch, a physician, a disciple of the Apostles; later he followed Paul to his martyrdom. Serving the Lord without fail, he had no wife, he bore no children, he died in Boeotia, full of the Holy Spirit, aged eighty-four. So, as gospels had already been written, by Matthew in Judea, by Mark in Italy, it was by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he wrote this gospel in the regions of Achaia; he explained at the beginning that others (gospels) had been written before his, but that it had seemed to him to be of great necessity to set out for the faithful of Greek origin a complete and careful account of events..."

This Greek preface to Luke's Gospel was found in 10th-century (or 12th-century) manuscript 91 in Athens and was edited by H. von Soden (*Die Schriften des N.T.* t. 1, Berlin, 1902-1910, p. 327). So Luke's Gospel would have been written in Achaia, in southern Greece. What is the largest city in Achaia? Corinth.

Let's now use the internal data of the Gospels to clarify the features of this community. A careful reading will enable us to identify certain characteristics of this Church. These characteristics will be compared with what is revealed in Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

a. The economic situation

Of all the evangelists, Luke is the only one to present various parables on the relationship between rich and poor: the parable of the foolish rich man (12, 13-21), the clever steward (16:1-13), the bad rich man and Lazarus (16:19-32), and Jesus' exhortation to invite the poor rather than the rich to a meal (14:12). Think, too, of the distinctive coloring of his Beatitudes (6:20-26), his version of the parable of the guests who steal away and are replaced by the poor (14:15-24), and the story of Zacchaeus, the rich man who gives part of his fortune to the poor (19:18). Such insistence is not gratuitous.

This community appears to be grappling with a problem of economic disparity. There are rich people ("Woe to you rich people...") and poor people ("Blessed are you poor people"). The rich find it hard to loosen their purse strings and share: "Fool, this very night, your soul will be taken from you. And what you have hoarded, who shall have it?" (12:20) This even leads to conflicts between brothers, since recourse to the courts is necessary: 'Master, tell my brother to share our inheritance with me...' (12:14). Literary criticism reveals that the parable of the rich fool was originally intended to include only vv. 16-20. So what did the writer add? "From the crowd someone said to him, 'Master, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.' Jesus said to him, 'Man, who made me judge or sharer over you?' He said to them, 'See and beware of greed, for in abundance a man's life is not in dependence on what belongs to him'" (vv. 13-15). We're talking about conflicting interests between brothers, over an inheritance, which presupposes the possession of a certain amount of property. We could add the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10) to this inquiry: what relevance would the figure of a rich man who knows how to give to the poor and make amends for injustices committed have if it did not target a community marked by tensions between rich and poor?

Such a portrait is consistent with what we learn from Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Corinth is a city with two seaports: Cenchrea to the east, on the Ionian Sea, open to ships from Egypt and Asia, and Lechaeon to the northwest, on the Adriatic Sea, open to ships from Italy, Spain and the western Mediterranean basin. It's a prosperous city. Sailors passed through while ships were pulled on logs or carts across the six km separating the two seas (the Corinth Canal obviously didn't exist at the time). Trade was intense. It was a young city (rebuilt in 44 BC), offering a wealth of opportunities. As a result, many adventurers arrived from Asia and Egypt to make a quick buck. It was the California of the time.

What was the economic situation of the Christians? The data we have suggests that a number of them were wealthy. For example, Erastus, the city treasurer: according to an inscription found at Corinth, the paving around the theater is due to his generosity. Crispus, head of the synagogue, must have been well off to hold such a position. Gaius, who could accommodate the entire Christian community, must have owned a very large house, which implies considerable financial means. The same can be said of Stephanas and Jason. Priscilla and Aquilas can probably be classed in the same category, since not only would they welcome Christians into their homes, but they would also travel quite easily, which suggests a certain financial capacity. As for Phoebe, she could be put in the same category, if she travels on business and can be patroness of Christians. We have confirmation of the financial situation of part of the community through the initiative it took in collecting for the poor of Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:10); this project was financed out of superfluity.

At the same time, the community is finding it difficult to loosen its purse strings and follow through on its project. Paul has to go back to them to shake off their torpor and tell them: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap, and whoever sows widely will also reap" (2 Cor 9:6). Similarly, tensions between rich and poor were one of the community's major problems. The splits Paul noted in the Eucharistic gatherings primarily pitted two economic classes against each other: there were those who could arrive early, offering abundant food (but which they shared only with people from their own social milieu), and those who had to toil until sundown and could bring only their meager provisions for the common meal (1 Cor 11:17-34); true sharing was not experienced.

Does this not reflect the economic environment of Luke's Church? Doesn't the parable of the rich man and Lazarus take on an interesting dimension in the context of Paul's denunciation of the scandal of Eucharistic gatherings? Similarly, Jesus' words: "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, invite neither your friends, nor your brothers, nor your relatives, nor rich neighbors..., but invite the poor, the crippled..." (14:12), became very relevant in the Corinthian context. For Luke, Zacchaeus is certainly the model of a Christian who knows how to make good use of his riches. Conversely, Luke's Jesus says: "Blessed are you who are poor..." (Lk 6:20).

b. The social situation

Another characteristic of Luke is his concern for the marginalized and sinners. He could be called the evangelist of compassion and conversion. In this respect, chapter 15 is very eloquent, with its evocation of the sheep found, the drachma found and the son found. The story of the forgiven sinner (probably a prostitute) (7:36-50), the parable of the Good Samaritan (10:29-37) and that of the Pharisee and the Publican (18:9-14) are all part of this approach. Whether it's the son who leaves his father, the prostitute, the Samaritan or the publican, or the good thief, each time we are referred to people on the fringes of Jewish society. What, then, is the evangelist's intention in offering these unique New Testament pericopes? Is it not because some of his audience or readers can relate to them? Also, whereas Matthew's Jesus invites us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, Luke's Jesus says: "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful" (6:36).

How can we describe the Lucan community? It's easy to imagine a motley crew of civil servants (18:13), social climbers (12:19), poor people (14:12), foreigners (10:33), businessmen (19:13), prostitutes (7:37) and debauched people (21:34). The worries (*merimna*) of life seem to characterize a certain number of people, since Luke returns twice to the subject (8:14 and 21:34, which is his own).

What's more, no other evangelist gave such a prominent place to women. Suffice it to mention some of the great figures in his Gospel, such as Mary and Elizabeth, Martha and Mary. He alone mentions female disciples who support Jesus with their possessions (8:1f). On the road to Calvary, a group of women follow him, beating their breasts and lamenting him (23:27); this last point is all the more interesting as the male disciples are absent. Is the loving, forgiven sinner not a woman? Luke's Jesus goes so far as to claim a feminine role: "For which is greater, he who sits at table or he who serves? But I am among you instead of the one who serves" (22:27). Luke even occasionally adds a parable featuring a woman to the one featuring a man: the mustard seed (13:18) and the leaven in the dough (13:20); the shepherd who lost his sheep (15:1) and the woman who lost her drachma (15:8). In the courtyard of the high priest, it is first a woman who challenges Peter and to whom he replies: "Woman, I do not know him" (22:57), then two men to whom Peter replies in turn: "Man, I am not" (22:58,60). How else to explain such preoccupation if not by the remarkable presence of women in the community, and perhaps even by a debate over the place they should occupy. For example, the story of Martha and Mary presents two roles, serving tables and listening to the Word, and thus brings into play two types of community involvement and the debate that surrounds it.

This social portrait corresponds to what Paul reveals about the Corinthian community. We're looking at a city of 500,000 or 600,000 inhabitants, made up of former soldiers of the Roman army, investors, merchants and craftsmen from all over the Empire, and, of course, natives. The Jewish colony had its own "Freedmen's Synagogue". Slaves could make up two-thirds of the population. So we're dealing with a highly composite environment, with a constant coming and going of the population, which in a young city invariably leads to cultural mutations. This can be seen in the situation of women. For example, in the Isthmian games, women are present in two competitions: the 200-meter race and the chariot fights. Such mutations lead to social instability.

What we know of the composition of the Christian community reveals a wide variety of origins and cultural backgrounds. Let's start with names. The epistles give us both Latin and Greek names: Titius, Justus, Aquilas, Prisca, Fortunatus, Gaius on the one hand, and Stephanas, Jason, Phoebe on the other. Some Christians are of pagan origin (1 Cor 8:7; 12:2), others of Jewish origin (2 Cor 11:22; Acts 18:8). The mention of slaves is explicit (1 Cor 7:21-33). Who are these weak, despised and unborn people of whom Paul speaks? Perhaps slaves or freedmen. On the other hand, we do find some notables, like Erastus, the city treasurer (Rom 16:23), or Crispus and Sosthenes, synagogue leaders (Acts 18:8,17). A word about the status of women. What we have seen for Corinthian society as a whole is reflected in the Christian community. A certain emancipation is noticeable. Paul's concern about the veil undoubtedly stems from a desire to break free from traditional customs, and thus reject the narrow place given to women (1 Cor 11:2-16). Women also took part in assemblies, at the risk of offending the sensibilities of some participants (14:33b-33).

In a cosmopolitan city, there are always those left behind. Saint Paul writes: "There are not many among you who are wise in the eyes of men, nor many who are powerful, nor many who are of good family" (1 Cor 1:26). The apostle to the Gentiles must convince those who do not seem to have prestigious charms that they have a place in the community; he uses the image of the body and its members (1 Cor 12:12f). He even speaks of the "weak" who are in danger of perishing, or who have already left the community, victims of the scandal of the strong (8:1-13). This is why he proposes a rule of conduct: "Therefore, if any food would cause my brother to fall, I will forsake eating meat forever rather than cause my brother to fall" (8:13). It's a way of inviting concern for the weaker brother.

c. The theological world

We can easily analyze the theological world of Luke's Gospel, in particular how he presents Christ and the role he gives to the Holy Spirit. But it's a little more difficult to relate these theological elements to the specific situation of his Church. Let's give it a try.

i. Jesus as prophet

More than any other evangelist, Luke emphasizes Jesus' prophetic mission; he gives Jesus the title of "prophet", particularly in his own passages, such as 13:31-33; 7:16,39. Thus, immediately after his baptism, Jesus inaugurates his preaching by taking on Isaiah's prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me..." (4:18ff). Throughout his mission, he will identify with the role and fate of the prophets (cf. 13:33), particularly Elijah (cf. 4:25). And conversely, his audience will perceive him as a prophet: "A great prophet has arisen among us" (cf. 7:16,39; 9:19). We can assume that Luke's language resonated with his community.

Let's look at what Paul reveals about the Corinthian community. Many of the problems Paul faced there seem to stem from the influence of mystery religions, which emphasized knowledge and revelation to initiates, neglecting the ethical part of the Christian life. And mystery religions encouraged ecstatic experiences. So it's hardly surprising that Corinthian Christians were so keen on prophecy and speaking in tongues: they were looking for extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. Yet being a prophet was one of the three great roles established in the community, along with that of apostle and teacher (1 Cor 12:28-29). And these prophets were often those who were sent on mission to preach in the various communities. Thus, the prophet Jesus on mission under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was the model for the prophet of the Christian community.

ii. Jesus as Lord

Luke, along with John, makes the greatest use of the title "Lord" to designate Jesus: Mt = 26; Mk = 3; Lk = 40; Jn = 44; Acts = 53. It's a term very well known in the classical Greek world, where it designates "the one who is master of, who has authority", i.e. the master, the householder, the legal representative, the guardian. This is the term chosen by the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *ādōnāy*, used to avoid pronouncing the proper name YHWH. It is therefore a generic term that sometimes designates God, sometimes Jesus, sometimes an owner, sometimes any person (the equivalent of our "sir"). Luke, belonging to the Greek world, uses this word abundantly, and especially absolutely with the article, to designate Jesus during his public life: "When the Lord saw the (widow), he was overwhelmed the Lord" (Lk 7:13; see also Lk 7:19; 10:1.39.41; 11:39; 12:42; 17:5.6; 18:6; 19:8.31, 34; 22:61; 24:3.34).

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul indicates that this term is widely used to indicate divinity: "For though there are so-called gods in heaven and on earth - and indeed there are many gods and many lords - yet for us there is only one God, the Father, from whom all things come and for whom we are, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist and through whom we are" (1 Cor. 8:5-6). And it is under the title of "the Lord" that Paul most often refers to Jesus in this letter to the Corinthians (e.g. "If anyone wishes to be proud, let him put his pride in what the Lord has done", 1 Cor 1:31).

iii. Jesus as Savior

Luke is the only one of the synoptics to give Jesus this title and to use the word "salvation"? As for the verb "to save", he is the one who uses it the most (Mt: 15 / Mk: 15 / Lk: 17 / Jn: 6 / Acts: 13), so we can guess at a context in which there was a desire for salvation, or at least, a context in which saviors were proposed.

In the Greco-Roman world, emperors were described as benefactors who gave people a zest for life, as evidenced by the decree of proconsul Paulus Fabius Maximus, dated 9 BC, which attributed an almost salvific role to the emperor Augustus. Indeed, emperors like to be described as "benefactors of mankind" and their birth as "the beginning of good news".

So it's understandable that, in Corinth, giving Jesus the title of "Savior" was a source of competition for the emperor. But for the Christian, the real Savior was the risen Jesus, not the emperor.

iv. The suffering servant

“Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer these things in order to enter into his glory” (24:26), says Jesus to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Behind these words we perceive a particular orientation of Luke’s catechesis. Not only does he use the word *suffer* (*paschō*) a little more than the others (Mt: 4 / Mk: 3 / Lk: 6 / Jn: 0 / Ac: 5), but he is the only one to use it absolutely, without complement or adverb, as at the beginning of the Last Supper narrative: “I so longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffered” (22:15; cf. 24:46; Ac 1:3; 3:18; 9:16; 17:3). This theme of suffering as an obligatory path to glory will recur in his Gospel like a refrain; it helps us to grasp the character of Jesus. This insistence even leads Luke to eliminate mention of the resurrection in the 2nd announcement of the passion.

Now, in Corinth, there was a group of people, no doubt influenced by mystery religions, who favored knowledge over ethical living, because this knowledge gave them great freedom. Thus, in their religious world, they put the emphasis on Christ’s resurrection and new life, forgetting the path by which this resurrection came about. What does Paul do? “No, I wanted to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). Doesn’t Luke’s insistence on the suffering figure of Christ make sense in such a context?

v. The righteous innocent

He paints this portrait of Jesus by drawing on the image of the suffering servant, as can be seen from this explicit reference: “For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me: He was numbered with the criminals” (22:37), a reference to the suffering servant of Isa 53:12 (“he allowed himself to be numbered with the evildoers”). In his passion narrative, Luke avoids the sacrificial language found in Mark and Matthew, but presents Jesus as the righteous innocent who died a martyr’s death out of faithfulness to his mission.

Such an elimination of categories linked to the sacrifices of the Jerusalem temple and their expiatory value can be explained by a non-Jewish context, where the experience of a sacrifice for the sins of the people does not exist. This was the case in Corinth. On the other hand, they had experience of the courts and knew what it meant to condemn the innocent.

vi. The Holy Spirit

Luke can be described as the evangelist of the Holy Spirit, and the main protagonist of the Acts of the Apostles is the Holy Spirit: Mt = 12 / Mk = 6 / Lk = 17 / Jn = 20 / Acts = 58. The Holy Spirit is at the origin of the mission of Jesus and the Church; he inspires Elizabeth, Zechariah and Simeon to prophesy; he is the gift to be asked for in prayer (11:13). The Acts of the Apostles attest even more strongly to the charismatic atmosphere: there’s the speaking in tongues and the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit on the three Pentecost days (2:13; 8:18; 10:46) and when Paul laid hands on the Baptists in Ephesus (19:6). Beyond Luke’s catechesis, aren’t we back in a community situation?

This is confirmed by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. Note that ecstatic experiences were encouraged in mystery religions. So it’s hardly surprising that Corinthian Christians were so keen on prophecy and speaking in tongues: they were looking for extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. So Paul had to curb their enthusiasm: “I am willing that you should all speak in unknown tongues, but I am even more willing that you should pass on messages received from God” (1 Cor 14:5). He devotes two chapters (chs. 12 and 14) to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

d. The Christian life

First of all, the 3rd Gospel could be defined as the Gospel of constancy and perseverance (*hypomonē*). The Christian faith is lived out day by day: “Give us the bread we need for each day” (11:3); “If anyone wishes to come after me, let him... take up his cross daily...” (9:23); “But stay awake and pray at all times...” (21:36); it was “for forty days” that Jesus was tempted by the devil (4:2). Similarly, Christians are invited to persevere despite obstacles: “Jesus told them a parable about the need for them to pray constantly and not to lose heart” (18:1); “By your perseverance you will gain life” (21:19). Such insistence signals the existence of a problem.

We are also familiar with Luke’s radical approach to the demands of following Christ. He is the only one to say that we must leave everything, renounce everything: “Bringing the boats ashore, the disciples left everything and followed him” (5:11; cf. 5:28; 18:22). This renunciation primarily concerns material possessions: “Whoever among you does not renounce everything that belongs to him cannot be my disciple” (14:33).

All this gives Luke’s Gospel a rather ascetic air. This is how we usually interpret the renunciation of his wife, which he alone mentions: “If anyone comes to me and does not prefer me to his father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, and even to his own life, he cannot be my disciple” (14:26; cf. 18:29).

Can such insistence be explained in the context of Corinth? The city of Corinth, like any seaport, was renowned for its prostitutes. Even if one doubts the claim that there were more than a thousand sacred prostitutes on the acrocorinth, in the temple of Aphrodite, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that the “oldest profession in the

world” was practiced there. Christians were not immune to the atmosphere of such an environment, and various moral problems affected the community. There is, of course, the case of the man who lives with his mother-in-law and whom Paul asks to excommunicate (1 Cor 5:1-13). But there is also the frequenting of prostitutes, to which some saw no harm, on the pretext that everything is permitted under Christian rule and that what concerns the body is not important (1 Co 6:12-20). On the other hand, other Christians seem to be developing an ascetic mentality. This, at least, is what chapter 7 suggests, beginning with a question posed by some: “Is it not good for the man to abstain from the woman?” Paul answers with a “yes, but”. Although he values celibacy, he does not do so for ascetic reasons. That’s why he asks those who don’t have this charisma to live normal relationships with their spouses.

Isn’t this the same world that looms large in Luke’s writing? Luke’s position is rather complex. On the one hand, his welcome for the prostitute is remarkable: “For this I tell you, her sins, her many sins, are forgiven her, for she has shown great love” (Lk 8:47). He values this woman’s capacity for conversion. John’s pericope on the adulteress, with its Lucan characteristics (Jn 8:1-11), could be added to this inquiry. On the other hand, Luke presents the following of Christ as a radical reality. We are familiar with his views on the renunciation of riches. We also know how often he returns to the theme of conversion (Lk 5:32; 13:1-9; 15:11-32; 24:45-48).

On the other hand, the Corinthian context could offer another meaning to Luke’s request to renounce his wife. Why shouldn’t this renunciation be understood in the context of mixed marriages, as mentioned in chapter 7 of First Corinthians? Paul proposes this solution: “But if the unbelieving party wants to separate, let him separate” (7:15). So, in a conflict situation, the Christian must be ready to let his or her spouse go if, because of his or her faith, reconciliation is no longer possible. You can never renounce your faith. Jesus’ words in Luke are aimed at such conflict situations, where a choice has to be made. From then on, the evangelist would no longer be the promoter of an ascetic trend, but rather of a scale of values that could guide a Christian’s choices and decisions.

Reading what the Epistle to the Corinthians has to say about this charismatic church, one suspects that a somewhat superficial, fickle spirit reigned there, seeking strong emotions and spectacular gifts. They were quick to take initiatives, but had difficulty bringing them to fruition, as shown by the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Paul had to return to the subject several times: “Complete the collection” (2 Cor 8:11). Rhetoric and fine speeches were also highly prized. That’s why Apollos was so successful with the Corinthians. Paul refused to play this game: “I have not come to proclaim to you the mystery of God with the prestige of words or wisdom” (1 Cor 2:2). He even calls the Corinthians superficial, unable to bear solid food (1 Cor 3:2). These enthusiasts, with their emphasis on the gift of new life, were forgetting the path that leads to the glory of Christ, and Paul reminds them that he only wanted to know one thing in their midst, the cross of Christ (2:2).

Isn’t Luke faced with a similar situation? For he develops the idea that it is in daily life, by taking up one’s cross day after day, that the Christian faith is lived out. He also speaks of constancy and perseverance: “By your constancy you will save your lives” (21:19; cf. 8:15). The parable of the iniquitous judge and the importunate widow certainly seeks to respond to the problem of the delay of the parousia. The problem seems important, since Luke concludes: “But will the Son of Man, when he comes, find faith on earth?” (18:8). This problem is touched on again in the parable of the mines: “As the people listened to these words, Jesus added a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they imagined that the Kingdom of God was going to manifest itself immediately” (19:11). Because of this context, the parable of the mines becomes an invitation to settle for the long term. Luke’s catechesis thus promotes values that are the opposite of the attitude of some of the Corinthians. The words here are less violent than in the case of the riches, but they are just as critical, and just as much aimed at changing the readers’ behavior.

2. Pericope readings in the context of this community

a. Lk 10: 1-20: Choosing and sending the 72 disciples

This pericope is unique to Luke. Whereas in ch. 9 he repeats what Mark wrote and describes the sending out of the 12 disciples on mission, in ch. 10 he presents the sending out of a new group. Why does this happen?

We know that Greece in general, and Corinth in particular, was evangelized by Paul, with the help of Timothy, Barnabas and Silas, and not by the Twelve. They were among the 72 chosen by the Lord and sent out two by two. By the time Luke wrote his gospel, the good news had reached the whole Mediterranean basin as far as Spain, i.e. the whole known world at the time, and thus the 72 nations mentioned in the book of Genesis. So all Christians in these regions can be assured that their missionaries were truly sent by Jesus, just as he sent the Twelve to the Jews, even if they were not sent by the historical Jesus, but by the risen Lord; and to assure himself of this point, he uses the verb “to appoint”, the same verb for the choice of Matthias to replace Judas among the Twelve, as well as the verb “to send” to make them “sent” or “apostles”. And since much of Jesus’ ministry took place in the Galilean countryside, Luke insists that it is now to the cities, a typical Greek setting, that the 72 are sent, as was the case with Paul going to Thessalonica, Philippi, Athens and Corinth.

As with the sending out of the Twelve, where Jesus gave his instructions, Luke accompanies this sending out of the 72 with instructions, which he introduces with an expression typical of him: “he said towards them” (*lego pros autous*). For these instructions, he draws heavily on the Q Document, first to justify a second dispatch after the sending of the Twelve: “The harvest is many, but the laborers are few. Pray, therefore, to the Lord of the

harvest, that he will send out his workers into the harvest". After justifying the need for a second sending, Luke finds it important to present the environment of this mission, and so chooses another text from the Q Document, a warning about the hostile environment that awaits the missionary: he will be like a lamb in the midst of wolves. What does Luke have in mind with this phrase? Such an environment describes what Paul experienced, particularly in Corinth, where he faced opposition from some, to the extent that he had to postpone a visit and write "a letter in tears" (2 Cor 1:12 - 2:13) following serious offenses by some. And for the whole of his missionary work, he reveals that five times he received the thirty-nine blows, three times he was scourged, once he was stoned, and he had to face the dangers of brethren of his own race, dangers from pagans, dangers from false brethren (2 Co 11:23-27).

After this introduction to the mission, Luke begins the instructions, starting with the one on how to travel: without money, without provisions, barefoot, without stopping because the mission is so urgent. Luke was certainly aware that few missionaries traveled without shoes. But for him, all this has a symbolic value: you have to travel poor to be consistent with the message, especially when you think of the Beatitudes, or all those poor slaves in the Corinthian community. Most missionaries lived off the hospitality of Christian communities. Paul also benefited from this hospitality, even if he insisted on continuing his trade as a tent-maker so as to be as little a burden on others as possible. In his presentation, Luke makes an amalgam of traditions, the one that comes to him from Mark, the one from the Q Document, which he sews together with his own vocabulary.

Whereas Jesus preached in the synagogues, and Paul spoke to the Jews in the synagogue, in the Church's time, the mission is carried out first and foremost in the home. That's where the community gathers, where catechesis takes place. So the instructions to missionaries concern the home. Here, Luke distances himself from Mark, who does not mention any words to be addressed to the home, and from Matthew, who asks us to first assess whether the host is able to accept the word: in his view, from the outset, the missionary takes the initiative in immediately offering the peace of the Gospel, which is in fact the Holy Spirit; this echoes his experience with the first Christian communities, where the gift of the Holy Spirit very often precedes baptism, as in the story of the centurion Cornelius who welcomes the Gospel (Acts 10:1-48). But it's a gift that can be accepted or refused. If the home is open to this gift, then it becomes a place of residence for the missionary, and even for the Christian community. We have here an echo of a common practice in the early Church concerning itinerant preachers, from which Paul himself may have benefited. For Luke, this ancient practice goes back to Jesus.

After the instructions on hospitality in the home, Luke now turns to the city. Why does he do this? Because the instructions for sending out the Twelve speak only of houses, never of cities. It's possible, then, that the setting for the sending out of the Twelve, which is the Greco-Roman environment, an urban setting, is one in which the various churches are defined primarily by the city in which they are located: the Church of Corinth, the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Laodicea, the Church of Philadelphia, and so on. For Luke, it's normal to talk about mission to a city, and this gives him the opportunity to update traditional instructions on mission. In addition, he probably wanted to integrate into his narrative the traditions about cities' refusal to welcome evangelical missions. However, as he likes a fine balance in composition (for example, when one parable features a man, he adds another with a woman), he chose to precede these traditions on the refusal of certain cities with a composition on the welcome by cities, to achieve a balance between welcome and refusal. Thus, he would have composed v. 8 and 9, reusing what he said about the mission at home (eating and drinking what is offered) and adding what is in fact a summary of Jesus' ministry: healing the sick and announcing that this is the sign that God's reign has come near.

Having said this, Luke can now turn to the situation of towns that refuse to accept the preaching of the Gospel. He has several traditions in front of him, starting with Mark's tradition of the house that rejects the missionary, a tradition he has already used for the sending out of the Twelve (9:5): shaking the feet, to signify that relations are cut off with this house. But he also has the Q Document in front of him, which clearly addresses the question of rejecting a city. So he sews these two traditions together, using his own vocabulary as a stitch. From Mark 6:11, he picks up on the case where the missionary is not received: we must not insist, we must go from there and remove what remains of the place from under his feet, to indicate the breakdown of the relationship. From source Q, he takes up the similar instruction to leave the city towards the public square, at the front gate, and there wipe away the dust of the city stuck to his feet. Q Document ends with the warning that the city that refused the gospel mission will face God's judgment, as was the case with Sodom, which perished under fire. To sew it all together, he adds an introduction about entering a city ("in whatever city it may be you enter"), and inserts, between the instruction about breaking off relationships and the warning of final judgment, this phrase: "nevertheless know that the kingdom of God has drawn near". Why this insertion? Despite the refusal of certain cities, the proclamation of the Gospel continues, and nothing can prevent the coming of the kingdom. Luke may have had in mind Paul's failure in Athens, where he was mocked (Acts 17:32-33), but which was followed by his resounding success in Corinth (Acts 18).

Having before his eyes a text from the Q Document on the curses addressed to the Jewish cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, which are compared to the pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon, as well as to the city of Capernaum, which will experience Sheol at the Final Judgment, Luke finds it appropriate to insert them at this point in Jesus' discourse concerning the cities that refuse the evangelical mission. Why is this so? Addressing Christians of Gentile origin, it allows him to make an important point: just because some people, particularly Jews of Jesus' time, witnessed his healings, doesn't mean they're any better able to become believers. The proof: Chorazin,

Bethsaida and Capernaum. And this allows those Christians of pagan origin in Corinth, Philippi or Ephesus to identify with Tyre and Sidon, for they have truly changed their minds and accepted the evangelical mission. We may have noticed that Luke's working method respects his sources as they are. The text in Q Document is addressed directly to the cities concerned. However, Luke inserts this text in a speech addressed to the 72, when he should have composed a suture text to make the transition, such as: "Tell these cities (which refuse to receive you) what I said to the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida: '...'" On the contrary, Luke inserts the text from the Q Document as it stands, creating a break in style and relegating it to the role of a foreign incise.

With the fate of the cities that refuse the mission, it's time to conclude Jesus' speech. Another text from the Q Document provides him with the words to emphasize the importance of the missionaries' role as messengers: "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects him (God) who sent me". In other words, the position taken towards the missionary is a position towards God.

As soon as the speech is over, the 72 already return from their mission, a sign that Luke intends to make section 10:1-20 a unit. The 72 address Jesus as "Lord", a sign that we are in the time of the Church. What do they learn from their mission? The most extraordinary thing: the healings, seen as a casting out of demons. For Luke, this is part of the Christian mission: Peter and John healed (Acts 3:6-9), Paul performed miracles (Acts 19:11). And all this is a sign that the kingdom of God is drawing near, and that the kingdom of evil is falling. To express all this, Luke uses an ancient image of the Jewish world, borrowed from the apocalyptic world, where Satan is cast down from heaven, a sign of the end of his empire. He then goes on to explain the missionaries' ability to heal: it's a delegation of Jesus' authority over evil, which is why everything is done "in the name of Jesus". It's hard to know where Luke got the image of authority over snakes, scorpions and the enemy (Satan), perhaps from an ancient oral tradition. Finally, there's one last thing the missionaries need to know: the source of their joy and pride is not this power over disease, but the fact that they've been chosen to be part of God's world, and to receive revelation about God's identity. So Luke concludes this discourse with a very old expression about the names that are written in the heavens, and will follow this discourse with a scene about revelation to the very young.

So what is Luke's intention in these 20 verses? It's always the same intention, spelled out at the very beginning of his Gospel when he addresses Theophilus, telling him that his story is intended to help him "recognize the solidity of the teachings you have received" (Lk 1:4). With 10:1-20, we're primarily concerned with the validity of missionary practices in the Greco-Roman church of the '80s. Everything that was done then was basically traced back to the historical Jesus and covered by his authority. So, even if the setting is no longer the Palestine of Jesus' time, there's no real difference.

b. Lk 6:39-45: Don't judge: assess the tree by its fruit

The evangelist has just finished composing the scene in which Jesus, after spending the night praying on a mountain, chooses twelve apostles for himself (Lk 6:12-16), a scene based on Mark 3:16-19. Jesus is thus ready for a new stage in his ministry, the first having taken place while Jesus was without a disciple and after he had presented the meaning of his mission to the synagogue of Nazareth. As he did for the first stage, Luke is keen to have an inaugural speech for the second stage. Taking Mark 3:7-11, where a large crowd from all over comes to hear him, after mentioning that Jesus is no longer on the mountain, but in a flat place, Luke plucks a loose leaf from the Q Document binder in a section focused on the Christian life, a loose leaf on the beatitudes, mentioning that Jesus is addressing his disciples, knowing that this will be interpreted as a discourse addressed to the Christian community; Indeed, in this second of Jesus' great discourses, Luke wants to focus attention on the Christian, on his life, on what is expected of him: "Blessed are you who are poor... Woe to you who are rich". You can imagine the impact of these words in Corinth. After the text of the beatitudes, Luke adds another loose leaf, perhaps related to the beatitudes, on the love of enemies, on the exhortation not to respond to evil with evil and to give to those who ask, in short to be merciful like God. Once again, we can imagine the impact in Corinth, when Christians could settle their commercial disputes in court. Still digging into this section on Christian action in the Q Document binder, Luke now adds a flyleaf exhorting us not to judge in order not to be judged, and reminding us that we'll be judged the way we've judged others. One imagines that this exhortation applied particularly to the highly conflicted community of Corinth. At Christian gatherings, there must have been a lot of finger-pointing at a brother or sister who had something to reproach. So Luke decides to emphasize this point. How does he do it?

Luke uses what he calls a parable - in fact, various images - to illustrate what is involved in judging others. From the Q Document binder, he chooses a flyer about a blind man leading another blind man, because conflict often arises under the pretext that we want to give the other person good advice, i.e. guide him in the right direction. We can then be a blind man who wants to guide another blind man. But Luke doesn't just want to accuse people in conflict of being blind, he wants to propose a way out of blindness. And so he finds another loose leaf on the disciple-master relationship, one that aims for the disciple to become like the master. In this context, the disciple who has been associated with the blind man guided by the master, the one who sees, can in turn become a master. To shed light on what this training involves, Luke chooses another loose leaf from the binder around the image of the twig and the beam; indeed, the aim of this training is to learn how to discover the beam that prevents us from seeing our fellow man clearly and guiding him like a master. But how do we discover this beam? Luke, who repeatedly speaks of conversion in his gospel, knows that it is only through personal transformation that we can see this beam, because the way we look at others depends on who we are. So, in his Q Document binder, he chooses a loose leaf around the image of the tree and its fruit. This helps his audience to

understand that the fruit that is judgment proceeds from the tree that is the person, and just as the good or bad tree produces different fruit, the good or bad man produces different judgment. But Luke adds the word heart (“from the good treasure of his heart”) to the text of his loose leaf about the good man who utters from his good treasure the good, because for him all human behavior depends on this heart, and it is there that the word of God that transforms it can reside. Having said this, Luke can now conclude, and he does so by choosing another loose leaf that has the capacity to sum it all up: “For out of the abundance of a heart speaks the mouth of a person”. So, all these judgments made about others are a reflection of the heart, i.e. of a person’s innermost being.

How was such a word received in Corinth? In Christian gatherings, did people begin to restrain their judgment and stop pointing fingers? Like today, we can guess that the impact was limited, since more than ten years later, conflicts in the Corinthian community were still notorious, as we see in Pope Clement’s letter in the year 96. But we can affirm that, as today, there were people in Corinth whose hearts were transformed by this word, and who left their blindness to become teachers who could guide others.

c. Lk 15:1-32: Recovering what has been lost

To understand Luke’s intention, we need to pay close attention to the context in which he places these three parables: the Pharisees and scribes criticize Jesus for welcoming the marginalized and sharing his table with them. The three parables answer the question: Why?

If the first addressees of Luke’s Gospel were the Christians of Corinth, then this question takes on its full meaning. Remember that Corinth was a seaport, with a motley crew of people from different backgrounds, including former soldiers in the Roman army, investors, merchants and craftsmen from all over the Empire, and, of course, the natives. The Christian community was a reflection of the city, as can be seen from Paul’s two letters to the Corinthians. Who were the “Pharisees” and “scribes” of the community? There were certainly Jewish Christians, as evidenced by the presence of Crispus, the synagogue leader: it’s possible that they resented these converts from paganism, whose morals they abhorred. What’s more, since there were many economic disparities, we can imagine that the better-off were rather conservative and probably had a hard time tolerating the presence of slaves at the Eucharistic sharing. Paul echoes their scandalous attitude (1 Cor 11:17-34).

For the first two parables, those of the lost sheep and the lost drachma, Luke dips into this “Q Document” binder, as did Matthew. But whereas the two stories in the Q Document probably ended with the shepherd finding his sheep and the woman finding her coin, Luke lengthens the first story with the rejoicing at home, and the second story with the calling of friends and neighbors to come to the feast. The allusion to the Eucharist is clear. This is the way we should look at this motley community. The phrase “more joy in renewing a relationship with a single deviant or sinner or outcast than with all those who don’t need to change their lives” may seem surprising. But the phrase is probably intended to be ironic. For Luke, the Christian life is fundamentally a constant journey, and we are all called to change our lives every day. The temptation is to create a distance between ourselves and the “others”. The Eucharistic gathering affirms one thing: we’re all in the same boat.

When the parable of the father and his two sons was told in Corinth, who could the audience identify with the two sons? Let’s not forget that the younger son is the one who runs away from home to lead a dissolute life in a foreign land. So it’s possible that in the figure of the cadet we saw some young members of the community who had come from paganism, some of whom were still frequenting pagan banquets (see 1 Cor 8 on this problem) and whose social attachments were still deep-rooted; some of them may have distanced themselves from the Christian community, and after a while perhaps expressed a desire to rejoin it. At the other end of the spectrum, the eldest may have been identified with the elders of the community, some of whom undoubtedly came from Judaism and constituted the most conservative members. One can imagine the tensions that could arise at the Eucharistic gathering. While the Eucharist is a moment of thanksgiving and rejoicing, how could one rejoice with people who had recently frequented not only pagan banquets, but also the prostitutes of the temple of Aphrodite (see 1 Cor 6:15-20)? Luke’s answer is clear: “But you had to celebrate and rejoice that your brother, who had died, had come back to life, who had been lost, had been found”.

D. John

1. Community features

To whom does John address his Gospel? According to tradition, this community is located in Ephesus, in modern-day Turkey. But biblical scholars such as R.E. Brown (see [Gospel according to John](#), in [Introduction to the New Testament](#)), and M.E. Boismard from the Biblical School of Jérusalem paint a more complex picture of this community, which first formed in Palestine before migrating to Ephesus (see the presentation on the evolution of this community in his book: [The Community of the Beloved Disciple](#)). This portrait is based above all on the testimony of the Gospel itself and the three Johannine letters. Let’s take a closer look.

The man referred to in the Gospel as the “beloved disciple” was a Palestinian, probably from Jerusalem (Jn 18:15: “... he was known to the high priest”). He was probably first a follower of John the Baptist, like Peter and Andrew, before following Jesus. He was part of a wider group of disciples than the Twelve, including former followers of John the Baptist. After Jesus’ death, this group was joined by anti-Temple Jews who converted in Samaria (see Jn 4 and

the story about the Samaritan woman and the Samaritans). They understood Jesus essentially in the Mosaic context (as opposed to the Davidic context): Jesus had been with God, whom he had seen and whose word he had brought into this world. Acceptance of this second group catalyzed the development of an elevated, pre-existence Christology (seen against the background of divine Wisdom; see Prologue) which led to debates with Jews who thought that Johannine Christians were abandoning Jewish monotheism by making Jesus a second God. Horrified, the Jewish authorities had this group expelled from the synagogue. All this contributed to the Johannine community developing great hostility towards the "Jews", whom they considered "sons of the devil", as well as contempt for those who did not break with the synagogue (see Jn 9:21-23).

Perhaps as a result of conflict with their Jewish brethren and persecution on their part, the community or part of it left Palestine for the Diaspora to teach the Greeks, perhaps in the region of Ephesus, which would highlight the Hellenistic atmosphere of the Gospel and the need to explain Semitic names and titles (e.g. Rabbi, Messiah). This form of exile leads the community to see not only the Jews, but the world in general as opposed to Jesus, and to see itself as not of this world, a world under the power of Satan, the Prince of this world. And even in its relations with other Christians, the community rejected some of them as having such an inadequate Christology that they were really unbelievers. All this contributed to a form of isolation or autarky, far removed from the Church structure that developed in Antioch, for example, with well-defined roles. They prefer to rely on the breath of the Spirit and insist on relationships of fraternal charity, seeing this as a superior approach to the rest of the Church represented by Peter (see the scene of the empty tomb in Jn 20:1-10). Unfortunately, the one-sided emphasis on the divinity of Jesus and the need for mutual love as the only commandment opened the way for some in the next generation, who knew only this Gospel, to develop a radical and exaggerated Christological vision of Jesus' life, in which he was no longer a human figure.

The first two Johannine epistles reveal that the community will experience a schism and split in two. On the one hand, there are those who, like the author of the letter, emphasize Jesus' humanity (having come in the flesh) and ethical behavior (keeping the commandments). And on the other hand, there are those who so exaggerate Jesus' divinity that they no longer see the importance of his human life and, in their own behavior, of maintaining moral probity: it's only important to believe in Christ, and that's enough; all this will be the source of a form of Docetism (Jesus wasn't like us, but only pretended to be) and Gnosticism (a totally knowledge-based approach). Unfortunately, there was no sufficiently authoritarian structure in the Johannine community to enable the letter writer to discipline secessionists who were actively seeking new adherents; he could only exhort those who were perplexed about the truth to test their minds.

The third Johannine letter tells us that the disintegration of the Johannine community led the group that emphasized the life of Jesus and the importance of brotherly love to set up a form of pastoral structure and to draw closer to the great "Catholic Church"; the community could no longer simply live in trust in the Spirit as sole teacher, and certain structures of authority became necessary. As John 21:15-17 testifies, Peter's authority was pastoral ("feed my sheep"), but based on love ("do you love me?"). This development eventually brought some Johannine Christians into the wider Church and preserved the Johannine heritage.

2. Pericope readings in the context of this community

a. Jn 6:41-51: bread from heaven

Our pericope (vv. 41-51) is part of what is commonly known as "the discourse on the bread of life", which follows the multiplication of the loaves and takes place in the synagogue at Capernaum, a discourse that takes the form of a synagogue homily from v. 35 onwards. This scriptural quotation is Exodus 16:4: "the fathers who ate the bread from heaven in the desert". When we come to v. 41, the homily comments on the expression "come from heaven" in Exodus 16:4, which is equivalent to "come from God" or "sent from God". It is at this point that John inserts the objection common in Jewish circles: how can he come from God, he who was born like everyone else of a father and mother we know well. This objection is typical of the religious world's perception of divine reality as something apart, different, far from our usual reality, belonging to the world of the sacred. Thus, Jesus cannot be a familiar human being and yet be bread from God. This objection is taken up again later: "But we know where he comes from, whereas when the Christ (or Messiah) comes, no one will know where he comes from" (7:27). What follows is Jesus' response, as expressed through the pen of John.

It's a two-part response. First, no one can accept his affirmation without the openness proper to the special gaze of faith. And this faith is the work of God, who transmits his word into the human heart, i.e. his values and his way of seeing life, so that everyone who welcomes this word spontaneously welcomes everything Jesus says and does, because they are the same values and the same way of seeing life. And since no one can see God, Jesus is the only evidence on what God thinks and asks. Paradoxically, God is only accessible through the familiar and known world represented by Jesus, and not through exoteric channels of any kind.

Secondly, anyone who accepts in faith the bread of Jesus' word discover that it is a source of life, rather like Peter who exclaimed: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (6:68). And this life cannot die. The conclusion of the homily then picks up on the opening quotation from Ex 16:4: since the ancestors who ate the bread of heaven have died, it is truly Jesus who is the true bread of heaven, the true source of this life that cannot die. In this, he is the sign the crowd is asking for, a greater sign than that given by Moses.

V. 51 begins a new reflection, with the Eucharistic gathering in the background. Here, John presents his version of the Eucharistic institution, which the synoptics place at Jesus' last supper: by eating this bread in faith, the Christian welcomes that life which presupposes the gift of his life by Jesus through his physical death; this life has a timeless and universal significance, for it is a life forever, and is offered to the whole world.

This pericope reveals a community situation. Firstly, it takes the form of a synagogal homily, an indication of the Palestinian origins of the evangelist and part of the community. According to A. Guilding (*The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, 1960), echoed by R.E. Brown (*The Gospel According to John*, I, p. 279), the synagogue liturgy had a three-year cycle, and for year 2 Exodus 16 was read as the first reading, and the prophet Isaiah as the second, the two books cited in Jesus' homily, four weeks after the Passover feast. The author of the gospel seems to have assembled homily fragments of ancient origin.

The pericope echoes the high theology of the community, i.e. a theology that emphasizes Jesus' kinship with God: "only he who comes from God has seen the Father". For this community, Jesus has a unique experience of God, and it is for this reason that he is able to help us discover him.

At the same time, John's gospel tells us of the lively discussions the believers in the community had with the Jews around them, who said: "Isn't this guy Jesus, the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know?". And it's understandable that this Jewish community, which has always fought to defend monotheism, should be shocked by the affirmation of Christian theology, which seemed a return to polytheism. The gap between the Christian and Jewish visions is such that the evangelist does not hesitate to say: only the inner movement of God in the human heart gives access to the Christian vision.

We also sense that we are in the Hellenistic milieu of Ephesus, where the language of Wisdom was familiar. For the bread Jesus offers to eat is first and foremost that of his Wisdom, so that those who open themselves to God receive his teaching. The influence of passages such as Sir 24:21 ("Those who eat me will still be hungry, and those who drink me will still be thirsty"), Prov 9:5 ("Go, eat of my bread, drink of the wine that I have mixed"), Sir 15:3 ("she will feed him with the bread of understanding, she will give him drink of the water of wisdom") is clear to see.

Finally, while the theme of the "bread of life" refers primarily to the revelation brought by Jesus, a secondary theme is also present, that of the Eucharistic gathering of the community. For the story began with the multiplication of the loaves, a clear evocation of the Christian Eucharist, and now Jesus identifies with this bread of life, which he links to his flesh and invites us to eat. For Christians, the scene of the manna in the desert was associated with the Eucharist. Thus, for the Johannine community, it was during the Eucharistic gathering that the Christian was strengthened both by Jesus' wisdom and by his life given as food.

b. Jn 15:26-27; Jn 16:12-15: the testimony of the Paraclete; the Paraclete as a guide for disciples

Our pericope is part of Jesus' great farewell discourse at his last supper. The Catholic liturgy has put together two pericopes that refer to the Paraclete. After speaking of his departure, Jesus warns his disciples that they will face a hostile environment. But they need not worry, for they will receive the support of the Holy Spirit, presented as the Paraclete, who will enable them to bear witness in this great trial that the world is putting them through. At the same time, this Paraclete will guide the disciple into an ever deeper understanding of what Jesus has said and done.

Jn 15:26-27 speaks of the confrontation to which the Johannine community was subjected, particularly by Jewish groups who excluded Christians of Jewish origin from the synagogues. There is even talk of persecution and trials. In this context, the evangelist reminds them that Jesus has assured them of a support, an advocate of sorts, sent by God, who will give them the same strength that was in Jesus during his trial.

The emphasis changes with Jn 16:12-15. We find again the communal emphasis on knowledge, expressed by the word "truth", a major theme in John. But this knowledge is not philosophical, but is that revealed in Jesus, and is therefore fundamentally a revelation about God. This knowledge is so profound, and in some ways so counter-intuitive, that it takes time to make its way into the believer's being. John attributes this slow work in the believer's being to the same Paraclete who, this time, rather than playing the role of advocate, plays the role of guide. But basically, it's the same divine breath coming from the Father and the Son.

c. Jn 10:1-10: the shepherd's parable

If the Gospels contain so many parables, the credit probably goes to Jesus himself, who seems to have had a talent for storytelling, even if it's virtually impossible to demonstrate that any of the parables (on the subject, see [J.P. Meier](#)) can be traced back to the historical Jesus. From the allegories of the shepherd and the sheep in ch. 10 of the fourth gospel, we can imagine some of Jesus' parables: it would be surprising if it were otherwise in the pastoral culture of 1st-century Palestine, where flocks of sheep were part of daily life. Here, in the pericope Jn 10:1-10, the evangelist has put together two parables, first that of the shepherd and the bandit (Jn 10:1-3a), which presupposes that the sheep were gathered in front of the house in an enclosure made of stones topped

with brambles and a fence to get in, then that of the shepherd who brings his sheep out of the pen with his voice (Jn 10:3b-6), two parables that he followed with an allegory to explain their meaning.

If these two parables date back to the historical Jesus, what significance did they have? According to the evangelist, the audience was made up of the Pharisees (Jn 9:40-41). We can therefore guess that it is they who are primarily targeted by the bandit in the parable, and through him the religious authorities, in particular the chief priests. For, according to Ezek 34, Jer 23:1-4 and Mic 4:6-7, the religious authorities have failed in their duty to care for the people entrusted to them by Yahweh. The image of entering the enclosure other than by opening the gate evokes a form of violence, probably the violence of the many religious laws. In contrast, Jesus presents himself as the true shepherd who cares for his flock and gives them the food they need. An evangelist like Matthew says similar things when he put into Jesus' own mouth, in reference to the many laws imposed on the people: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you relief" (Mt 11:28).

According to M.E. Boismard, the Gospel according to John was first published around the 60s, when Palestine was in turmoil with the revolutionary movement of the Zealots who wanted to liberate the country from the Romans, leading to the intervention of the Roman army and the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. Palestinian Christians seem to have refused to join the rebellion. According to Eusebius of Caesarea ([Church History](#) 3, 5, 3) and Epiphanius ([Panarion](#) 30, 2, 7), some of the Christians fled to the town of Pella near the eastern bank of the Jordan, in the Palestinian Decapolis, present-day Jordan. But it may well have been around this time that the Johannine community opted to settle in Ephesus, in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). In this first edition of the Gospel, the author would have brought together two traditions on Jesus' parables around the theme of the shepherd and the sheep. Given the political context, the character of the bandits could be associated with the rebels who wanted the Christian community to join the rebellion and used violence to coerce them; the rebels had no real concern for the members of the community, but simply sought to use them for their political ends. Conversely, the leader of the community, perhaps the beloved disciple, who cares for everyone, makes the choice to leave and lead this community into the Greek environment of Ephesus; the community agrees to follow him, because they know he cares for them and knows each of them. And so the evangelist adds this conclusion or explanation to the parable: "I am the shepherd of the sheep. All those who came [before me] are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them."

Some thirty years later, around 90 or 95, according to M.E. Boismard, the gospel received a new edition after the community had been established for some time in Ephesus. The context had changed. Firstly, the Jewish Christians had been expelled from the synagogue for good. Secondly, tensions had arisen within the Christian communities themselves. First of all, there was the Judeo-Christian movement, which had confronted Paul and which still seems to be alive and kicking: they argued that, even if you were a disciple of Jesus, Jewish practices such as circumcision, dietary restrictions and some of the Jewish laws were still in force. But above all, there are those who emphasize the knowledge and divinity of Jesus, neglecting his humanity and the demands of ethical behavior in everyday life. As a result, the parable's enclosure becomes one in which several flocks live together; the Christian family has become plural, and the gatekeeper must identify the true shepherd. And the shepherd does not call all the sheep, but only those that belong to him, i.e. those who have remained faithful to the teaching of the beloved disciple. The flock that follows him considers the other leaders to be impostors. It was probably in this last edition of the Gospel that the author amplified the conclusion/explanation as follows: "I am the gate: if anyone enters through me, he will be set free. He will walk and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, slaughter and destroy, but I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." In contrast to the parable, the gate in the explanation of the parable is no longer associated with the doorkeeper who opens access to the good shepherd, but is associated with Jesus himself, and becomes the symbol of the path to follow to find the right food. We can easily guess that the evangelist intends to affirm that only the authentic teaching of Jesus, probably transmitted by the beloved disciple, is a path of life, i.e. one that leads to God and enables us to truly be his sons and daughters, whereas the teaching of Judeo-Christians and those who stray into a form of Gnosticism leads to spiritual death.