

# ‘Blessed is Whoever is Not Offended by Me’: The Subversive Appropriation of (Royal) Messianic Ideology in Q 3–7

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Jesus is never explicitly identified as the ‘messiah’ or *christos* in Q. The conspicuous absence of this particular term—so frequently used in the Pauline letters and the Gospels—is often taken to mean that the Q community was uninterested in, unaware of and/or rejected kerygmatic traditions which understood Jesus as a ‘messianic’ figure. Yet a careful analysis of the literary structure of Q 3–7 demonstrates that the redactor of Q both appropriated and subverted ‘traditional messianic expectations’ of a popular warrior-king by framing Jesus’ baptism, temptation and Inaugural Sermon within announcement and confirmation passages that serve to both affirm and *qualify* Jesus’ relationship to ‘messianic’ traditions. Located within a text dominated by the theme of eschatological reversal, the literary structure of Q 3–7 serves as a rhetorical defense in the redactor’s construction of a new identity for Jesus.

**Keywords:** Q, Jesus, kingship, messianism, Christian origins

## Introduction

The Sayings Gospel Q does not explicitly identify or name Jesus as ‘messiah’ or Christos (Χριστός). Jesus is the ‘Son of God’, the ‘son of man’, a child of ‘Wisdom’, the ‘Coming One’ and ‘Lord’, but never the ‘messiah’. The conspicuous absence of this term—so frequently used in the Pauline letters and the Gospels—has sometimes been taken to mean that the Q community was uninterested in, unaware of and/or rejected *kerygmatic* traditions which understood Jesus as a ‘messianic’ figure.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the dominant paradigm in the study of

<sup>1</sup> Marcus J. Borg, *The Lost Gospel Q* (Berkeley: Ulysses, 1996) 27–8; Burton Mack, ‘The Christ and Jewish Wisdom’, *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 214; Christopher Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996) 214; L. E. Vaage, *Galilean* 307

Q's christology is that Q shifted from a 'low' christology in its formative period to a significantly higher christology in its redaction.<sup>2</sup> This paradigm also reflects the idea that Q represents a distinct community, theology and christological profile as well as a complex compositional history.<sup>3</sup> Unsurprisingly, these ideas have generated considerable debate, and cogent questions have been raised in response.<sup>4</sup> Here I would like to (re)examine the significance of the absence of the term 'messiah' in Q and propose an explanation for that absence.

### The Anointed One(s)

First, however, it is important to define our terms, as there are numerous methodological problems associated with the study of (ancient) Jewish messianism.<sup>5</sup> The word 'messiah' is derived from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ ('anointed') and can be

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*Upstarts: Jesus' First Followers According to Q* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1994) 90–1; Paul Foster, 'The Pastoral Purpose of Q's Two-Stage Son of Man Christology', *Biblica* 89 (2008) 81–91, esp. 82.

<sup>2</sup> See especially John S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q: Trajectories in Ancient Wisdom Collections* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> H. E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. D. M. Barton; London: SCM, 1963); Dieter Lüthmann, *Die Redaktion der Logienquelle* (WMANT 33; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1969); S. Schulz, 'Die Gottesherrschaft ist nahe herbeigekommen (Mt 10,7/Lk 10,9). Der kerygmatische Entwurf der Q-Gemeinde Syrien', *Das Wort und die Wörter* (G. Friedrich FS; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973) 57–67; Richard A. Edwards, *A Theology of Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976); Vaage, *Galilean Upstarts*.

<sup>4</sup> Edward P. Meadors, *Jesus the Messianic Herald of Salvation* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1995); Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 229–44; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 150–2; G. N. Stanton, 'On the Christology of Q', *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (ed. B. Lindars and S. S. Smalley; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1973) 27–8.

<sup>5</sup> Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah*; Jacob Neusner et al., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (New York: Cambridge, 1987); John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); Kenneth Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995); Antti Laato, *A Star is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectations* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997); Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997); Gerbern S. Oegema, *The Anointed and His People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba* (JSPSup 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998); John Day, ed., *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup 270; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., eds., *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003); Markus Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget, eds., *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (London: T&T Clark, 2007); Magnus

used adjectivally and/or as a noun or title, to refer to a king, priest or prophet divinely appointed to fulfill some particular task.<sup>6</sup> The term is also used to refer to figures not explicitly identified as 'messiahs'.<sup>7</sup> One can thus be 'anointed' without actually being identified as a 'messiah' in a titular sense.<sup>8</sup>

### The Origins of Messianism: Royal Ideology and Divine Kingship

The 'messiah' as a proper title does not occur in the Hebrew Bible. When eschatological messianism *does* begin to appear (around 200 B.C.E.), it does not take the form of a coherent or systematically developed theology. Rather, 'messiahs' appear as nebulous figures in different texts with conflicting portraits. Moreover, the emergence of eschatological messianism in the second century B.C.E. follows the post-exilic period, which has led some to suggest that messianism itself is a *late* development in post-exilic Judaism.<sup>9</sup>

Nonetheless, the origins of the messianic *idea* do seem to have their earliest roots in the royal ideology of kingship in the ancient Near East. The king was often regarded as the living embodiment of the relationship between the human and the divine.<sup>10</sup> The covenant with David took the shape of an eternal loyalty to the house of David: his dynasty would endure forever.<sup>11</sup> Each king was heralded as receiving his kingship from God and celebrated in the 'royal psalms' (Ps 2; 72; 110) composed in honor of the king's coronation rituals.

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Zetterholm, ed., *The Messiah in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985); Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (trans. G. W. Anderson; Nashville: Abingdon, 1954); Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel from Its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

<sup>6</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*; N. A. Dahl, 'Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus', *The Messiah* (ed. Charlesworth) 389; David E. Aune, 'Christian Prophecy and the Messianic Status of Jesus', *The Messiah* (ed. Charlesworth) 411; William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998) 25; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 76, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 73, 82. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 145–64, uses the term to refer to 'an agent of God in the end-time who is said...to be anointed, but who is not necessarily called "messiah" in every passage'.

<sup>8</sup> The book of Leviticus refers to the 'anointed priest' (הכהן המשיח) (Lev 4.3, 5, 16; 16.15). Deutero-Isaiah describes Cyrus as 'his anointed' (למשיח). Elijah 'anointed' Elisha as a prophet (1 Kgs 19.16). See also Ps 105.15; 1 Cor 16.22; 1 Kgs 19.16; Isa 61.1–12; Joel 3.1; 1 Sam 24.6, 10; 26.16; 2 Sam 1.14, 16.

<sup>9</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*.

<sup>11</sup> 2 Sam 7.11–16 and Ps 89.20–38.

These psalms describe the king as God's son,<sup>12</sup> an eternal priest and 'king of righteousness'<sup>13</sup> who is given universal dominion.<sup>14</sup> The ideal king judges 'with righteousness' and defends 'the cause of the poor'.<sup>15</sup>

The 'anointed' king was consecrated to God.<sup>16</sup> This noble ideal of kingship, however, was never consistently realized in the historical kings of Israel. As a result, Israel's misfortunes came to reflect this less than ideal realization of the king's role, and royal ideology came to have a predominantly future idealization: i.e., the *present* king may be wicked, but the *future* king will restore the Davidic kingdom to its former glory.<sup>17</sup> The hopes that had once been placed on individual Davidic kings were now projected onto a future 'anointed' figure who would fulfill them *someday*. The royal king thus became an eschatological agent of divine redemption.<sup>18</sup>

### The Diversity of First-Century Messianism

First-century Judaism was not uniform.<sup>19</sup> There was substantial diversity in how Jews regarded the Torah, viewed the Temple, practiced *halakhah* and assimilated to or resisted Greco-Roman culture. Consequently, we cannot impose a 'normative' view of Jewish messianism on all first-century Jews. There does not seem to have been any unified Jewish 'messianic' expectation at the time of

<sup>12</sup> Ps 2.7.

<sup>13</sup> Ps 110.4.

<sup>14</sup> Ps 72.8.

<sup>15</sup> Ps 72.2–14; Gen 49.10, Num 24.17; Isa 10.34–11.5.

<sup>16</sup> Dahl, 'Messianic Ideas and the Crucifixion of Jesus', 384.

<sup>17</sup> Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, 99.

<sup>18</sup> The book of Daniel contains two references to 'an anointed (one)'. Yet the lack of a definite article in Dan 9.25–26 requires the translation: '*an* anointed' figure(s), not '*the* anointed (one)'. Daniel describes a time of tribulation 'until an anointed one, a prince (עַד מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד)'. Dan 9.26 marks *another* transitional period, predicting that 'after threescore and two weeks an anointed one will be cut off, and will have nothing' (כִּי־רֵבַע מֵשִׁיחַ וְאֵין לוֹ). The author of Daniel refers to Cyrus' proclamation of support for the rebuilding of the Temple (Isa 44.29; 45.13; Zech 1.16; Ezra 6.14). Isa 45.1 identifies Cyrus as the 'Lord's anointed' (לַמְּשִׁיחַ). The 'anointed' who is 'cut off' may be a reference to Onias III, the 'anointed' high priest murdered during the reign of Antiochus IV in 171 B.C.E.; the 'destruction' of the city may be a reference to an invasion of Jerusalem by 168 B.C.E. by Antiochus (1 Macc 1.29–39); and the 'abomination that causes desolation' may be a reference to an altar of Zeus that Antiochus installed in the Temple.

<sup>19</sup> Neusner et al., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs*; I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked and G. G. Stroumsa, eds., *Messiah and Christos: Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity, Presented to David Flusser on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992); Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah*; E. Stegemann, ed., *Messias-Vorstellungen bei Juden und Christen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1993). Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 189: 'we should think of a spectrum of messianic expectation'.

Jesus,<sup>20</sup> nor any single, identifiable 'role' for a 'messiah' to fulfill.<sup>21</sup> This diversity suggests that first-century C.E. Jews would be amenable to diverse fulfillments of 'anointed' figures, whether through conventional warfare (royal-political), predictions of prophetic deliverance (prophetic), charismatic powers or alternatives to the temple traditions (priestly). That is, some 'anointed' figures could conceivably issue challenges to the traditions that other first-century Jews held dear. Naturally, this could (and would) result in sectarian conflict(s).

John J. Collins has identified four basic messianic paradigms: that of anointed 'king, priest, prophet, and heavenly messiah'.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Collins also holds that there was a common popular 'expectation'—that of the royal warrior-king who would restore the kingdom of Israel, overthrow Israel's enemies, unite the twelve tribes and bring universal peace.<sup>23</sup> While there certainly was diversity in how 'messianic' ideas were expressed, the most common understanding of the term does seem to draw on the idea of divine kingship. So there is both diversity and a certain qualified unity of concept.<sup>24</sup>

Josephus describes a number of charismatic prophetic movements linked with political revolution in the years leading up to and during the Jewish Revolt of 66–73 C.E. Some of these movements were led by figures recognizably characteristic of 'prophets'. Others are more adequately designated as popularly acclaimed 'kings'.<sup>25</sup> We see, therefore, considerable diversity in messianic/anointed

<sup>20</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 78; Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah*, 5; Oegema, *The Anointed and His People*, 303; Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty*, 271; Martin Karrer, *Der Gesalbte. Die Grundlagen des Christustitels* (FRLANT 151; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 243; Marinus de Jonge, 'The Use of the Word "Anointed" in the Time of Jesus', *NovT* 8 (1966) 132–48; Neusner et al., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs*; R. A. Horsley, ' "Messianic" Figures and Movements in First-Century Palestine', *The Messiah* (ed. Charlesworth) 276–95.

<sup>21</sup> Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah*, 5; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993) 240–1; Morton Smith, 'What is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?', *JBL* 78 (1959) 66–72. See also Albert I. Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation* (JSJSup 55; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 153–4; Neusner et al., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs*; Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah*; Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*.

<sup>22</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 67. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 622, acknowledges the diversity of messianic figures but concludes that the expectation of a warrior king was 'one expression of a more diversely expressed hope, yes; but the most prominent and widespread of the various expressions of that hope'.

<sup>24</sup> Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2006) 128–9, challenges the 'warrior messiah' model as an anti-Jewish construction derived from a dichotomy between the 'Old Testament God of fear' and the 'New Testament God of peace'.

<sup>25</sup> For prophetic figures, see Josephus on Jesus, son of Hananiah, 'Theudas' (*Ant.* 20.97–98) and the 'Egyptian' (*War* 2.261–62; *Ant.* 20.169–71). For (would-be) 'kings', see Josephus on

figures, be they royal, priestly or prophetic, in first-century Judaism. The alleged identification of 'the messiah' as a *fixed* theological concept in first-century Judaism has thus been over-determined. There is no single definition of the messiah, as there were multiple ways in which various individuals proposed to fulfill divinely appointed tasks, and prospective kings, prophets and priests could be regarded as 'anointed'. At the same time, first-century Judaism could presuppose a common royal ideology based on scriptural tradition, Davidic legend and nationalistic biblical (and extra-biblical) narratives. The tension between this common royal ideology and the remarkable diversity 'on the ground' characterizes the complexity of first-century Palestinian Jewish messianism. Yet it is within this cultural complexity that the Sayings Gospel Q must be located and identified.

### The Sayings Gospel Q: A 'Messianic' Text?

The problem, again, is that Q does not use the term 'anointed', 'messiah', 'Χριστός'. Does this mean that the 'Q people' did not believe in Jesus as messiah? Were they not interested in (or aware of) messianic descriptions of Jesus? These suggestions have elicited many criticisms. For example, can the *absence* of the term 'messiah' really be regarded as a convincing argument for the community's disinterest in *kerygmatic* traditions? Could the Q community not have been *aware* of 'messianic' interpretations of Jesus when Paul—at the very same time, and presumably in contact with the Jerusalem community—uses Χριστός like a proper name? If the earliest version of Q *did* have a 'low' christology, regarding Jesus as a prophet, miracle-worker and teacher, then how—and *why*—did Q come to regard Jesus as the coming son of man? This transition seems inexplicable without some kind of conceptual bridge, i.e., an exalted view of Jesus, which must itself then be explained.<sup>26</sup>

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Athronges (*War* 2.57, 60; *Ant.* 17.273, 278–85), Simon, and Judas, the son of Hezekiah (*War* 2.56; *Ant.* 17.271–72). During the Revolt, Simon bar Giora, the principal military commander in Jerusalem, entered Jerusalem as a Davidic king and was ultimately executed by Rome as 'king of the Jews' (*War* 7.29–31, 36, 153–54; 4.507–534). Josephus also mentions Menahem, who broke into Herod's arsenal and 'returned like a king to Jerusalem' (*War* 2.433–34). Josephus states that his fellow Jews were incited by 'an ambiguous oracle' (χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος) found in scripture (ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν) describing how one of their countrymen would become the 'ruler of the world' (ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης) (*War* 6.312). This 'messianic' ruler who would bring the whole world (οἰκουμένη) under his rule was interpreted by Josephus as referring to Vespasian, but this may have been a common Jewish hope (Tacitus *Hist.* 5.13; Suetonius *Vesp.* 4.5).

<sup>26</sup> John S. Kloppenborg, ' "Easter Faith" and the Sayings Gospel Q', *The Apocryphal Jesus and Christian Origins* (ed. Ron Cameron; Semeia 49; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 71–99, esp. 83.

Q scholarship continues to be challenged by these questions. Indeed, many Q specialists regard Q as a ‘non-messianic’ text reflecting a ‘non-messianic’ Jesus movement in Galilee positioned between Jesus’ execution as ‘King of the Jews’, the ‘messianic’ proclamations of Paul and the Jerusalem community and Q’s later incorporation into the explicitly ‘messianic’ Gospels of Matthew and Luke. This is a remarkably anomalous parallel existence and may have as much to do with Q’s pivotal role in ideologically motivated reconstructions of Christian origins as it does with unbiased, disinterested assessments of the historical and literary data. But even granting this scenario, what are we to make of passages in Q which seem literally to ‘cry out’ for a ‘messianic’ interpretation? For example, even if ‘Q1’ does focus on the radical wisdom of the ‘kingdom of God’, this concept is related to the myth of divine kingship.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in ‘Q2’ Jesus is the ‘Coming One’ (7.22), the ‘Son of God’,<sup>28</sup> the ‘Son’ of the Father<sup>29</sup> and the son of man.<sup>30</sup> The devil offers him ‘all the *kingdoms* of the world’ (4.5) and he has the authority to appoint his disciples as eschatological judges (22.30). ‘Q2’ contained an implicit christology.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, the title ‘Son of God’ *could* represent the Davidic heir to the throne<sup>32</sup> and both the titles ‘son of man’ and ‘the Coming One’ *could* refer to a messianic figure.<sup>33</sup> 4Q521 also illuminates how Q 7.22 would have been seen as an Isaianic list of miracles expected during the ‘messianic’ age.<sup>34</sup> Finally, *if* Q contained a baptism account, it would also appear as if Jesus was indeed ‘anointed’ by

<sup>27</sup> Kloppenborg, ‘The Sayings Gospel Q’, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Q 3.22; 4.3, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Q 10.22.

<sup>30</sup> Q 6.22; 7.34.

<sup>31</sup> John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 396, notes that there is ‘at least implicitly a Christology’ in Q. See also B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), 291.

<sup>32</sup> 2 Sam 7.14; Pss 2.7; 72.1–7; 89.26; 1 Chron 17.13; 4QFlor; 4Q246; Mark 1.1; 14.61.

<sup>33</sup> 4 Ezra 13.37, 52; 1 En. 48.2–10; 52.4; Mark 14.61–62; John 12.34; Ps 118.26; Mark 11.9–10; Luke 19.28–38; John 12.13–15.

<sup>34</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 37; E. Puech, ‘Une Apocalypse Messianique (4Q521)’, *RevQ15* (1992) 475–519; *Discoveries of the Judaean Desert XXV: Qumran Grotte 4 XVIII: Textes Hebreux (4Q521–4Q528, 4Q576–4Q579)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 1–38; See also Robert Eisenman, ‘A Messianic Vision’, *BAR* 17.6 (1991) 65; R. Eisenman and M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1992) 19–23; J. D. Tabor and M. O. Wise, ‘4Q521 “On Resurrection” and the Synoptic Gospel Tradition: A Preliminary Study’, *Qumran Questions* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995) 151–163; Geza Vermes, ‘Qumran Forum Miscellanea I’, *JJS* 43 (1992) 299–305; L. H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library at Qumran* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994) 347–50; Collins, ‘The Works of the Messiah’, 98–112.

the spirit.<sup>35</sup> It is difficult to deny that these passages are consistent with ‘messianic’ ideas.<sup>36</sup> Yet it is also hard to accept the idea that Q’s lack of the term ‘messiah’ is entirely accidental.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps, then, we should consider the possibility that the absence of the term in Q is significant and requires explanation. In this article, I would like to propose that the use of the term ‘messiah’ was indeed problematic for the author of Q who both appropriated and subverted traditional ‘messianic’ expectations in order to construct a new identity for Jesus and the Q community.

### The Literary Structure of Q 3.2b–7.35

The redactor of Q sought to convince others that Jesus was the long-awaited fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel. To do so, Q’s wisdom traditions were integrated with material that supported Jesus’ identification as the

<sup>35</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus: The Second Source of St. Matthew and St. Luke* (trans. John Richard Wilkinson; NTS 2; London: Williams & Norgate, 1908) 310–14; B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 188; Petros Vassiliadis, ‘The Nature and Extent of the Q Document’, *NovT* 20 (1978) 49–73, esp. 73; Athanasius Polag, *Fragmenta Q: Textheft zur Logienquelle* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1979) 30–1; Dieter Zeller, *Kommentar zur Logienquelle* (SKNT 21; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984) 23; Migaku Sato, *Q und Prophetie: Studien zur Gattungs- und Traditions-geschichte der Quelle Q* (Inaugural dissertation; Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät, Bern, 1988) 25; Arland Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1992) 85–6; James M. Robinson, ‘The Sayings Gospel Q’, *The Four Gospels: Festschrift Frans Neiryneck* (ed. F. van Segbroeck; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University, 1992) 361–88. See also Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (THNT 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1981 [1961]), 106–7; H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HTKNT 3/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 1.197, 218; Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (NA8; 3d ed.; Münster: Aschendorff, 1982 [1972]), 4, 39; Arland Jacobson, ‘Wisdom Christology in Q,’ Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1978, 35–6, 152. For scholars denying the existence of Jesus’ baptism in Q, see Frans Neiryneck, ‘The Minor Agreements and Q’, *The Gospel behind the Gospels: Current Studies on Q* (ed. R. A. Piper; NovTSup 75; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 49–72; Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1993) 8–9.

<sup>36</sup> Edward P. Meadors, *Jesus the Messianic Herald of Salvation* (WUNT 72; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 253–77. Rudolf Bultmann, ‘What the Saying Source Reveals about the Early Church’, *The Shape of Q: Signal Essays on the Sayings Gospel* (ed. John S. Kloppenborg; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 33–4; originally published as ‘Was lässt die Spruchquelle über die Urgemeinde erkennen’, *Oldenburgische Kirchenblatt* 19 (1913) 35–7, 41–4, argues that the image of Jesus in Q contains ‘elements of the Jewish Messiah... sayings and stories fully bear the character of a messianic portrait. Jesus is consecrated as Messiah at his baptism. His struggle in the wilderness with the devil is a messianic testing. Elijah is his precursor; Jesus is the Messiah. His deeds are those of the Messiah (Matt 11.2–6//Luke 7.18–23)’.

<sup>37</sup> Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 252, argues that the absence of the term ‘Christ’ is not significant because ‘Christ’ is also not found ‘very frequently in the sayings material in the Synoptic Gospels’.



'Coming One' and the 'Son of God'. This is worked out most clearly in Q 3.2b–7.35, which many Q specialists regard as an integrated unit.<sup>38</sup> Yet the significance of the literary structure of Q 3–7 does not seem to have been given sufficient weight in recent discussions of Q's christology, which is odd, considering that this section focuses predominantly on the question of Jesus' identity.<sup>39</sup> This first major section consists of an 'aggressive rhetorical strategy whose focus...is legitimation, establishing the ethos of the sage, and recruitment' in order 'to legitimate Jesus as the 'Coming One'.<sup>40</sup> Yet if the central thrust of Q 3–7 is the 'legitimation and authorization'<sup>41</sup> of Jesus' identity, then the beginning of Q seems to be a carefully constructed sequence that both subverts and appropriates traditional 'messianic' ideology. The structure of Q 3–7 frames this subversion:

- Q 3.16b–17: John's prediction of the 'Coming One'
- Q 3.21b–22: Jesus is 'anointed' by the Spirit
- Q 4.1–13: Jesus refuses 'all the kingdoms of the world'
- Q 6.20b–49: Jesus inaugurates the non-violent 'kingdom of God'
- Q 7.22: Jesus confirms he is the 'Coming One'
- Q 7.23: Jesus blesses those not 'offended' by him

The rhetorical power and persuasive force of this complex structure should not be underestimated. Accordingly, my argument has six components: (1) John's prediction of the 'Coming One'; (2) a baptismal account in Q; (3) Q's Jesus' rejection of worldly kingdoms; (4) the placement of the Inaugural Sermon within the literary structure of Q 3–7; (5) Jesus' reply to John in Q 7.22; and (6) the isolated makarism of Q 7.23.

### 1. *John the Baptist and ὁ ἐρχόμενος*

First, the arrival of the 'Coming One' is announced in Q 3.16b–17. Drawing from Ps 118.26 ('Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord', LXX Ps 117.26a) (εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου), John predicts the

<sup>38</sup> T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949) 39–148; Dale C. Allison, *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1997); Jacobson, *The First Gospel*, 125, 130; Sato, *Q and Prophetie*, 35, 389; M. Sato, 'The Shape of the Q Source', *The Shape of Q* (ed. Kloppenborg) 156–79, esp. 166–7; J.D. Crossan, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 156, 342–5; Robinson, 'The Sayings Gospel Q', 361–88, esp. 365–6; Elisabeth Sevenich-Bax, *Israels Konfrontation mit den letzten Boten der Weisheit: Form, Funktion und Interdependenz der Weisheitselemente in der Logienquelle* (MThA 21; Altenberge: Oros, 1993) 267; Alan Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source: Genre, Synchrony, and Wisdom Redaction in Q* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 364–97.

<sup>39</sup> Stanton, 'On the Christology of Q', 29, 35, argues that 'scant attention has been paid to the opening sections of Q in recent discussions of its Christology and purpose'.

<sup>40</sup> Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source*, 367, 376.

<sup>41</sup> Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source*, 390.

arrival of a powerful figure who will vindicate the righteous and condemn the wicked. The 'Coming One' is not a 'usual messianic title'.<sup>42</sup> A number of scholars see John's expectation as complementary to Q's description of the 'son of man', who is also powerful and will arrive unexpectedly to reward the faithful and punish the wicked. The 'Coming One' is best understood as a reference to an individual human agent.<sup>43</sup> As we will see, Q affirms Jesus' identity as the 'Coming One', but does so in such a way as to leave Jesus' future role unfulfilled.<sup>44</sup>

## 2. *A Baptism in Q?*

Although the minor agreements are 'notoriously inconclusive', there is good reason to posit a baptismal account in Q.<sup>45</sup> Q *begins* by introducing John the Baptist, which is a fitting way to narrate a baptismal account of Jesus.<sup>46</sup> Yet in the temptation narrative, Q presupposes that Jesus is the son of God. A bridge is needed, therefore, between John the Baptist's own ministry and Jesus' temptation in the desert as the son of God.<sup>47</sup> Jesus' 'sonship' in Q would thus

<sup>42</sup> Dieter Zeller, 'Redactional Processes and Changing Settings', *The Shape of Q* (ed. Kloppenborg) 123, citing Hoffmann, *Studien*, 199. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981), 666, argues that ὁ ἐρχόμενος in Luke 7.19 is not a messianic title, but rather 'the messenger of Yahweh', *Elias redivivus*, whom Jesus rejects.

<sup>43</sup> Although some scholars have speculated, appealing to Mal 3.1, that John may have expected the eschatological arrival of Yahweh.

<sup>44</sup> Foster, 'The Pastoral Purpose', 84, 91, sees the role of ὁ ἐρχόμενος as complementary to that of the 'son of man' as the Isaianic events listed in Q 7.22 provide a 'foretaste' of the Coming One's future role as judge/son of man. Daniel A. Smith, *Post-Mortem Vindication of Jesus in the Sayings Gospel Q* (NTS 338; London: T&T Clark International, 2007), also focuses on the figure of the 'Coming One' in Q 13.34-35 as a redactional expression of Jesus' future eschatological role.

<sup>45</sup> James Robinson, "The Sayings Gospel Q," in *The Sayings Gospel Q: Collected Essays by James M. Robinson* (BETL 189; eds. Christoph Heil & Joseph Verheyden; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 342. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* (trans. Wilhelm C. Linss; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989) 184, notes that the temptation account's 'twice-repeated title Son of God may demonstrate that from the beginning our pericope stood in juxtaposition with the baptismal narrative'.

<sup>46</sup> Q, like Mark, begins with John and Jesus' baptism, and bears a striking resemblance to the 'adoptionistic' Ebionite tradition described by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 30.13.7) where he quotes the *Gospel of the Ebionites'* version of Matt 3.13-17 to include an additional passage from Ps 2.9 ('this day I have begotten you'). See also Justin *Dialogue with Trypho* 88.8, 103.6.

<sup>47</sup> Kloppenborg, *Formation*, 84-5, argues that 'the Son of God Christology presupposed by the temptations demands the existence of a baptismal account containing this motif'. James Robinson, "The Sayings Gospel Q," 343, argues that "The inclusion of Jesus' being designated God's Son by the heavenly voice, or some equivalent, is needed in the narrative preface to Q for it to cohere'. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 148, views the temptation in Q as authenticating Jesus' divine sonship as pronounced in the story of his baptism.

seem to support an earlier baptismal account. The International Q Project gave the baptism account a grade of {C} for ‘uncertainty’,<sup>48</sup> but the verbal agreements, as minimal as they are, do point to a version of the account quite similar to Mark’s, where the heavens open and the ‘Spirit’ descends on Jesus and he is declared to be God’s Son.<sup>49</sup>

Ἰησοῦ...βαπτισθε...νεωχθη...ο...οὐρανο...  
καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα...ἐπ’ αὐτόν...υἱ...

The agreements are compelling: if Q included a baptismal account, it is likely that it described Jesus being ‘baptized’ (βαπτισθε), the heavens opening (νεωχθη ο οὐρανο) and the ‘Spirit’ (τὸ πνεῦμα) descending upon him (ἐπ’ αὐτόν), after which he is declared ‘son’ (υἱ). If so, then Jesus’ ‘anointing’ by the Spirit and being declared the ‘Son of God’ in Q 3.21b-22 suggests that the ‘Spirit’ serves as the agent of a spiritual ‘anointing’ paralleling the presumed physical baptism.

### 3. The Temptation

Third, in Q 4.5-8, Jesus is ‘tempted’ by the devil but refuses ‘all the *kingdoms* of the world’ (πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου), thus rejecting ‘political-messianic world rule’.<sup>50</sup> Jesus’ identity as the ‘Son of God’ (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ) was not ‘convertible with political messianism’.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, the use of

<sup>48</sup> James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Sayings Gospel Q in Greek and English* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002) 78.

<sup>49</sup> At several points in their respective accounts, Matthew and Luke agree against Mark: both drop Mark’s references to John and the Jordan; both change Mark’s aorist indicative use of βαπτίζω to an aorist participial form; both include the name Ἰησοῦς (whereas Mark has the name earlier); both change Mark’s use of the verb σχίζω (σχιζομένους) to the verb ἀνοίγω, although Matthew uses the aorist passive indicative (ἠνεώχθησαν) while Luke uses the aorist passive infinitive (ἀνεωχθῆναι); and both change Mark’s εἰς αὐτόν (‘on him’) to ἐπ’ αὐτόν (‘onto him’). Robert L. Webb, ‘Jesus’ Baptism by John: Its Historicity and Significance’, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 98, points out that Matthew and Luke’s agreements against Mark, although not identical, include ‘omission of the same words, addition of the same words, alteration of grammatical forms, and alteration of word order’.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Hoffmann, ‘Die Versuchungsgeschichte in der Logienquelle’, *BZ NF* 13 (1969) 207-23, esp. 214; Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle* (NTAbh NF 8; Münster: Aschendorff, 1975) 74-8, 308-11, 326, argues that the temptation narrative explained ‘why the Q group did not participate in the Zealot movement’. See also Iris Bosold, *Pazifismus und prophetische Provokation* (SBS 90; Stuttgart: KBW, 1978) 63. On the other hand, see Jacobson, *The First Gospel*, 89. See also Ernst Percy, *Die Botschaft Jesu. Eine traditionskritische und exegetische Untersuchung* (LUA, NF 1/49.5; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1953) 13-18.

<sup>51</sup> Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 254. Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), 256; Adolf von Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus: Seine Sprache, Sein Ziel, Seine Selbstständigkeit: ein Kommentar zum ersten Evangelium* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1957 [1929]), 95-112. Stanton, ‘On the

the title 'Son of God' echoes the designation of Jesus as the 'son' in Q 3, and so it has been suggested that Q 3.21b-22 and Q 4.1-13 function together as a unit.<sup>52</sup> More importantly, Q 4.1-13 further develops precisely what *kind* of 'Son of God' Jesus is.<sup>53</sup> Jesus' renunciation of worldly power functions on two levels: (1) to *affirm* his identity as the 'son of God'; and (2) to *qualify* his identity by rejecting any political expectations associated with this title.

The idea that Jesus himself avoided the term 'messiah' because of its 'political' connotations is accepted by a number of scholars.<sup>54</sup> Q both fails to use the term 'messiah' *and* rejects the idea of Jesus leading a political, 'worldly' kingdom. Moreover, Q 4.5-8 contains the theme of eschatological reversal, a radical counter-cultural stance that subverts traditional assumptions.<sup>55</sup> The reversal of expectations is characteristic of Q.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, if the 'popular' expectation

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Christology of Q', 34-5, argues that the use of the term 'Son of God' is not only 'Christological' but 'very probably a Messianic title here' even though there is 'polemic against false understandings of Messiahship'. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 185, notes that the 'clear main accent' requires 'a *Christological interpretation*' as the passage is clearly about Jesus' sonship. Luz acknowledges Hoffmann's thesis that a Christological interpretation may be 'directed primarily against a political misunderstanding of sonship with God'. Yet Luz argues that 'the rejection of false hopes or conceptions, Jewish or Christian, is ... not the main concern of the pericope' as the connecting link between the temptations is Jesus' obedience to the Word of God. Luz's proposal does not preclude this pericope from being a polemic against the *kinds* of temptations that Jesus needed to face. After all, the point of the narrative is to show *how* Jesus was tempted, not only how he responded to temptation. Following Luz's own admonition—that it is 'certainly incorrect to claim such a mythical pictorial text for one single interpretation exclusively'—the temptation narrative can be seen as Q's illustration of *how* Jesus fulfills his role as 'Son of God'.

<sup>52</sup> James Robinson, "The Sayings Gospel Q," 343.

<sup>53</sup> Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 256; David R. Catchpole, *The Quest for Q* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 230-1.

<sup>54</sup> Tuckett, *The Messianic Secret*, 1; J. P. Meier, 'From Elijah-like Prophet to Royal Davidic Messiah', *Jesus: A Colloquium in the Holy Land* (ed. Doris Donnelly; New York: Continuum, 2001) 63, 71; Ben Witherington III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 143, 41; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 31; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 377; T. W. Manson, *The Servant-Messiah: A Study of the Public Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 71-2.

<sup>55</sup> Gary T. Meadors, 'The "Poor" in the Beatitudes of Matthew [5.3] and Luke', *Grace Theological Journal* 6.2 (1985) 305-14.

<sup>56</sup> Arnal, *Jesus and the Village Scribes*, 160. See Q 3.8; 4.5-8; 6.20-23, 27-28, 32-34; 7.9, 22; 12.2-3; 13.18-19, 20-21, 30; 14.11, 16-18, 26; 16.18; 17.33.

was that of a ‘warrior-king’, then the *reversal* of that expectation would be a rejection of such ideas, which is precisely what we find in Q 4.5–8.

#### 4. *The Inaugural Sermon*

Fourth, the insertion of the Inaugural Sermon (Q 6.20–49) within Q 3–7 highlights its function as the heart of Jesus’ teaching on love, compassion and non-violence. The Sermon is widely affirmed as the oldest and most authentic part of Q. The distinction, therefore, between the Sermon and its framing material highlights a secondary development in the Jesus tradition. This aspect of Q represents a sociological response to a perceived rejection which reflects a seminal moment in Jewish responses to the Jesus movement and a shift towards a more hostile reaction to ‘this generation’ that was later turned against the Jews as an ethnic group when a new distinctive ‘Christian’ identity was formed.<sup>57</sup>

Q is a collection of Jesus’ sayings reflecting both the rejection of the movement and the group’s response to that rejection. Jesus became a symbol of judgment and vengeance directed at Q’s opponents and the broad-minded outlook of the Sermon was compromised by the group’s conflict with its contemporaries. Nonetheless, the Sermon’s Jesus is not a ‘warrior-king’ intent on restoring Jewish political independence; he introduces the ideal of non-violent non-resistance. As in the temptation narrative, where Jesus will not be what is ‘expected’, so here Jesus demands the reversal of what is expected. The traditions from which Q developed subverted traditional ‘messianic’ politico-military assumptions.<sup>58</sup>

#### 5. *Are You the Coming One? Q 7.22 and 4Q521*

Fifth, in Q 7.18–22, John the Baptist sends his disciples to confirm whether or not Jesus is the ‘Coming One’ (ὁ ἐρχόμενος), which echoes the earlier prediction in Q 3.<sup>59</sup> Q 7.22 plays an important role in Q, for it provides a summarizing

<sup>57</sup> Simon J. Joseph, ‘A Social Identity Approach to the Rhetoric of Apocalyptic Violence in the Sayings Gospel Q’, *History of Religions* (2011), forthcoming.

<sup>58</sup> See also D. H. Juel, ‘The Origin of Mark’s Christology’, *The Messiah* (ed. Charlesworth) 449–60; R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, ‘Sacred Violence and the Messiah: The Markan Passion Narrative as a Redefinition of Messianology’, *The Messiah* (ed. Charlesworth) 461–93.

<sup>59</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Überlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer* (FRLANT 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911) 6–8; J. Ernst, *Johannes der Täufer: Interpretation—Geschichte—Wirkungsgeschichte* (BZNW 53; New York: de Gruyter, 1989) 55; Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 115; Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity*, 126. On Q 7.18–23 being a later addition to an earlier layer of Q, see Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 166–70; Wendy Cotter, ‘“Yes, I Tell You, and More Than a Prophet”: The Function of John in Q’, *Conflict and Invention: Literary, Rhetorical, and Social Studies on the Sayings Gospel Q* (ed. John S. Kloppenborg; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995), 135–50, esp. 135. On the disconnect between the Baptist’s question and Q 7.22, see Tuckett, *Q and the History of Early Christianity*, 126. As tradition, see W. D. Davies & D. C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*

and organizing principle for the first major section of Q 3–7.<sup>60</sup> Michael Labahn sees Q 7.18–23 as part of the earliest tradition in Q.<sup>61</sup> Here Jesus responds to John's inquiry regarding his identity by listing a series of miracles he has already performed. Q 7.22 thus brings together two scriptural traditions: a royal 'messianic' proof-text in Ps 117.2 and a string of Isaianic prophecies from Isaiah 26, 35 and 61. These scriptural references revolve around Jesus' identity as the 'Coming One'.

Jesus' reply to John is an indirect claim to be messiah.<sup>62</sup> Both Matthew and Luke interpret Q 7.22 as Jesus' 'messianic' credentials.<sup>63</sup> Yet here Jesus is evasive, neither confirming nor denying his identity, although the Q community clearly interpreted his reply through Isa 29.18, 35.5 and 61.1. It cannot be said that Jesus' reply contains 'an explicit messianic claim' but rather that his deeds are 'part of the eschatological events in which God acts'.<sup>64</sup> Jesus' indefinite answer in Q 7.22 'seems to be a rhetorical signal' since Q does not seem to regard the question as one that can be 'answered by a clear yes or no'.<sup>65</sup> It is evident, however, that Jesus' reply does not quite tally with John's expectations: John does not seem to have predicted a miracle-worker. Jesus was *not* what John expected: the acceptance of Jesus as the 'Coming One' requires a modification of expectations.

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(3 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 198–1997), 2.244–6; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975), 56–60; W. G. Kümmel, 'Jesu Antwort an Johannes den Täufer: Ein Beispiel zum Methodenproblem in der Jesusforschung', *Heiligeschehen und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze, 1965–1977* (ed. E. Grässer and O. Merk; MS 16; Marburg: Elwert, 1965–78) 2.177–200, esp. 195–200. See also Thomas Hieke, 'Q 7, 22: A Compendium of Isaian Eschatology', *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 82.1 (2006) 175–87.

<sup>60</sup> James Robinson, 'Building Blocks in the Social History of Q', in *The Sayings Gospel Q*, 500.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Labahn, 'The Significance of Signs in Luke 7.22–23 in the Light of Isaiah 61 and the Messianic Apocalypse', *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. Craig A. Evans; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004) 153 n. 33.

<sup>62</sup> Stanton, 'On the Christology of Q', 32; C. K. Barrett, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1947) 118; Kümmel, *Heiligeschehen und Geschichte*, 2.434; Lührmann, *Logienquelle*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> Stanton, 'On the Christology of Q', 32.

<sup>64</sup> Labahn, 'The Significance of Signs', 158.

<sup>65</sup> Labahn, 'The Significance of Signs', 153; See also Cotter, '“Yes, I Tell You”', 140–2; J. I. H. McDonald, 'Questioning and Discernment in Gospel Discourse: Communicative Strategy in Matthew 11.2–19', *Authenticating the Words of Jesus* (ed. B. D. Chilton and C. A. Evans; NTTSup 28/1; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 344.

4Q521 provides a striking list of Isaianic miracles thought to characterize the messianic age,<sup>66</sup> i.e., what God would perform when his 'messiah' arrived on the scene.<sup>67</sup>

כי השמים והארץ ישמעו למשיח  
 כי יכבד את חסידים על כסא מלכות עד  
 מתיר אסורים פוקה עורים זוקף כפ[ופים]  
 כי ירפא הללים ומתים יהיה ענוים יבשר

The eschatological blessings described in this Qumran fragment bear a striking similarity to those described in Q 7.18–22.<sup>68</sup> Kloppenborg refers to the similarity between the two texts as 'an uncanny resemblance'.<sup>69</sup> Jesus' reply to John thus suggests that Jesus confirmed this identification. He instructs the messengers to tell John what they have seen:

τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται  
 καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, καὶ νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται

Jesus seems to be giving John's messengers recognizable signs of his messianic identity through a kind of exegetically coded message.<sup>70</sup> Jesus' response to John's inquiry confirms that miraculous healing was a legitimate sign of the messianic advent. Matthew 11.2 appears to confirm this reading as he describes these events as τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Before the publication of 4Q521, Q 7.22 did not seem to reflect 'traditional Jewish expectations about the messiah'.<sup>71</sup> 4Q521 has characteristics reminiscent

<sup>66</sup> 4Q521 2 ii 1,7–8, 12.

<sup>67</sup> Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins*, 37. For the original publication, see Puech, 'Une Apocalypse Messianique (4Q521)'; *Discoveries of the Judaean Desert XXV*, 1–38; Robert Eisenman, 'A Messianic Vision', *BAR* 17.6 (1991) 65; Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, 19–23; Tabor and Wise, '4Q521 "On Resurrection"'; Geza Vermes, 'Qumran Forum Miscellanea I', *JJS* 43 (1992) 299–305; Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 347–50; John J. Collins, 'The Works of the Messiah', *DSD* 1 (1994) 98–112.

<sup>68</sup> Puech, 'Une Apocalypse Messianique (4Q521)', 475–519; *Discoveries of the Judaean Desert XXV*, 1–38; Eisenman, 'A Messianic Vision', 65; Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, 19–23; Tabor and Wise, '4Q521 "On Resurrection"'; Collins, 'The Works of the Messiah', 98–112.

<sup>69</sup> Kloppenborg, 'The Sayings Gospel Q', 330 n. 101: 'The deeds of the Messiah listed in 4Q521 bears an uncanny resemblance to the deeds of Jesus listed in Q 7.22'. See also Kloppenborg Verbin, *Excavating Q*, 405 n. 72: 'It would appear that a synthesis of Isaian texts was *already* in circulation by the time of the composition of Q (and certainly, Matthew) and that Q 7.22 reflects this exegetical development'.

<sup>70</sup> Tabor and Wise, '4Q521 "On Resurrection"', 163.

<sup>71</sup> Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 107. Foster, 'The Pastoral Purpose', 86, notes that 'the catalogue of activities drawn from Isaianic passages do not readily fit into a hitherto known set of Messianic expectations'.

of (Qumranic) sectarian texts,<sup>72</sup> and while there is some debate about precisely what *kind* of messiah is present in 4Q521, (i.e., royal, priestly or prophetic), the text is best seen as referring to a singular, royal messianic figure.<sup>73</sup> The author of Q inherited or had access to traditions in which such deeds were already ascribed to a coming messianic age and/or figure.<sup>74</sup> Q 7.22 'could be a mosaic put together in some other context and just taken over (and perhaps adapted) by Q to its redactional purposes...one might find here in the redactional layer of Q already dependence on an erudition shared with Qumran'.<sup>75</sup> John J. Collins has also proposed that it is

<sup>72</sup> E. Puech, 'Some Remarks on 4Q246 and 4Q521 and Qumran Messianism', *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (ed. Donald W. Parry and Eugene Ulrich; STDJ 30; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 552; Craig A. Evans, 'Qumran's Messiah: How Important Is He?', *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. J. Collins and R. A. Kugler; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 135-49, esp. 137 n. 17; Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, 19; Tabor and Wise, '4Q521 "On Resurrection"', 162; J. H. Charlesworth, "Have the Dead Sea Scrolls Revolutionized Our Understanding of the New Testament?" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 20-25, 1997* (eds. L. H. Schiffman, Emanuel Tov & James C. VanderKam; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/The Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 2000), 129; George J. Brooke, 'The Pre-Sectarian Jesus', *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament* (STDJ 85; ed. Florentino García-Martínez; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 46. As non-sectarian, see Geza Vermes, 'Qumran Forum Miscellanea I', *JJS* 43 (1992) 303-4; Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 347; R. Bergmeier, 'Beobachtungen zu 4Q521 f2, II, 1-13', *ZDMG* 145 (1995) 44-5. Collins, 'The Works of the Messiah', 106, is undecided.

<sup>73</sup> Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, 19; Florentino Garcia Martinez, 'Messianic Hopes in the Qumran Writings', *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. F. Garcia Martinez and J. Trebolle Barrera; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 169; Puech, 'Une apocalypse messianique', 498-9; *Discoveries of the Judaean Desert XXV*, 18-19, 37; 'Messianism, Resurrection and Eschatology at Qumran and in the New Testament', *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. E. Ulrich and J. Vanderkam; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1994) 235-56; P. Stuhlmacher, *Wie treibt man biblische Theologie?* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1995) 32; O. Betz and R. Riesner, *Jesus, Qumran und der Vatikan, Klarstellungen* (Giessen: Brunnen, 1993) 112; García Martínez, 'Messianische Erwartungen in den Qumranschriften', 183-5. John J. Collins has suggested that the messianic figure of 4Q521 (and so perhaps the Jesus of Q 7.22) is a 'prophetic messiah of the Elijah type rather than of the royal messiah' (Collins, 'The Works of the Messiah', 98-9). See also *The Scepter and the Star*, 117-22. For criticism of Collins' position, see Neiryneck, *Q 6.20b-21: 7,22*, 58-9 n. 16. While it is true that prophets could be 'anointed' and that this figure preaches 'good news' to the poor, as does the figure in 11QMelchizedek ii 18, יבשר in 4Q521 does not refer to a 'herald', as יבשר does in 11QMelchizedek. Furthermore, in 4Q521, the figure is not explicitly identified as announcing the 'good news'; rather, it is the *Lord* who does so. Second, the 'anointed of the spir[it]', in 11Q13 2.18 is not necessarily a *prophetic* figure, for 11Q13 prefaces its description by identifying the figure as the one 'about whom Dan[iel] said', which, if 11Q13 is quoting from Dan 9.25, refers to an 'anointed prince'.

<sup>74</sup> Robinson, 'The Sayings Gospel Q', 5.

<sup>75</sup> Robinson, 'The Sayings Gospel Q', 5.



‘quite possible that the author of the Sayings source knew 4Q521; at least he drew on a common tradition’.<sup>76</sup> Jesus’ answer to John’s query appeals to a *Qumranic* sequence of ‘proof-texts’, which not only implies that John the Baptist would recognize them, but establishes that Jesus himself knew what they were. Q 7.22 thus represents Jesus as fulfilling John the Baptist’s *and* Qumran/Essene messianic expectations, although not quite in the way they may have anticipated.

#### 6. Q 7.23

Sixth, the dissonance between John’s expectation and Jesus’ reply is expressed in Q 7.23, a beatitude which expresses that some could be ‘offended’ (σκανδαλισθῆ) by Jesus, presumably his reversal of values and expectations. Q 7.23 thus ‘serves an apologetic purpose’ reflecting Q’s criticism of ‘this generation’.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, Q 7.23 rhetorically secures and legitimizes Jesus’ identity as the ‘Son of God’ and the ‘Coming One’ by declaring those ‘blessed’ who are not offended by him. The saying thus serves a double purpose, both criticizing ‘this generation’ of non-believers and affirming the blessedness of the faithful. In this light, Q 7.23 is comparable with 4Q521’s promise of salvation to the pious.<sup>78</sup> The framework of the first major section of Q, and particularly Q 7.18–23,<sup>79</sup> mediates the conflict between John’s expectation and Jesus’ fulfillment of

<sup>76</sup> Collins, ‘The Works of the Messiah’, 107. See also Tabor and Wise, ‘4Q521 “On Resurrection”,’ 161. Klaus Koch, ‘Heilandservartungen im Judäa der Zeitenwende’, *Die Schriftrollen von Qumran: Zur aufregenden Geschichte ihrer Erforschung und Deutung* (ed. S. Talmon; Regensburg: Pustet, 1998), 107–35, esp. 116; Labahn, ‘The Significance of Signs,’ 166. But see also J. Zimmermann, *Messianische Texte aus Qumran: Königliche, priesterliche, und prophetische Messiasvorstellungen in den Schriftfunden von Qumran* (WUNT 2/104; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) 343–89, esp. 343 n. 84. For a more skeptical position, see Lidija Novakovic, ‘4Q521: The Works of the Messiah or the Signs of the Messianic Time?’ in *Qumran Studies: New Approaches, New Questions* (eds. Michael Thomas Davis & Brent A. Strawn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 225; Dale C. Allison, *The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000), 112. Hans Kvalbein, ‘Die Wunder der Endzeit—Beobachtungen zu 4Q521 und Mt. 11.5p’, *ZNW* 88 (1997) 111–25; ‘The Wonders of the End-Time: Metaphoric Language in 4Q521 and the Interpretation of Matthew 11.5 par’, *JSP* 9/18 (1998) 87–110, stresses the differences between 4Q521 and the gospel tradition in arguing that the miracles in Isaiah should be read as metaphorical language for the renewal of Israel, not references to literal individual persons.

<sup>77</sup> Labahn, ‘The Significance of Signs’, 161, cites 7.31; 11.29–32, 51.

<sup>78</sup> Labahn, ‘The Significance of Signs’, 157: Q 7.23 ‘functions as a literary-sociological link. On the negative side, 7.23 is directed against “this generation”... On the positive side, the beatitude strengthens the group, which acknowledges itself to be safe and secure in the light of the promise of salvation’.

<sup>79</sup> Labahn, ‘The Significance of Signs’, 157, citing Ron Cameron, ‘“What Have You Come Out to See?” Characterizations of John and Jesus in the Gospels’, *Semeia* 49 (1990) 35–70.

that role.<sup>80</sup> Q 7.22–23 is thus a pivotal narrative moment in Q, for it betrays a tension, an admission of scandal, an awareness that Jesus might disappoint some expectations.

### Conclusion

The Jesus of Q is not a king defending his territory, maintaining an army or violently expelling his enemies. He is not a priest in the temple. He shares characteristics with prophetic figures, but if John the Baptist himself is ‘*more than a prophet*’, then what does that make Jesus, a figure whom ‘prophets and kings’ have longed to see (Q 10.24)? The author of Q does not use ‘anointed/messiah’ as a title for Jesus. Yet this does not mean that the author of Q was not ‘interested’ in or rejected ‘messianic’ traditions and ideas. The author avoids the term as a problematic referent but exalts Jesus by advancing a program essentially opposed to ‘traditional’ messianic ideas requiring politico-military violence. Q both affirms and appropriates Jesus as an ‘anointed’ figure while it simultaneously qualifies and subverts ‘traditional’ or popular messianic associations by reinterpreting them through the lens of eschatological reversal, i.e., Jesus is portrayed as the embodiment of an eschatological reversal of royal ‘messianic’ expectations.

The redactor of Q also drew on motifs consistent with royal messianism, but aimed *higher*, moving on to more exalted referents,<sup>81</sup> giving the title ‘Son of God’ greater significance in Q 10.22, conflating the earthly ‘son of man’ sayings with sayings identifying Jesus with the cosmic figure of Dan 7.13 and identifying Jesus as ‘the Coming One’, an eschatological agent of judgment. Yet this strategy was not particularly successful, for the redactor also undermined the subversive message of Q 6.20b–49 and Q 4.5–8 by locating them within Q’s larger Deuteronomistic framework, which was then itself incorporated into Matthew’s and Luke’s explicit identifications of Jesus as the *Davidic* messiah.

<sup>80</sup> Kirk, *The Composition of the Sayings Source*, 380; Sevenich-Bax, *Konfrontation*, 326; Hoffmann, *Studien*, 214–15; Cotter, ‘“Yes, I Tell You”’, 135–50, esp. 140–1; John S. Kloppenborg, ‘Literary Convention, Self-Evidence and the Social History of the Q People’, *Semeia* 55 (1991) 77–102, esp. 93–4; Robinson, ‘The Sayings Gospel Q’, 361–2.

<sup>81</sup> Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 252, notes that Q describes Jesus in ‘more exalted (?)’ terms than ‘messiah’.