

# The Image of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew

## -A Psychological Approach

Hawaii University International Conferences on Arts and Humanities

8 – 10 January 2012

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I)

The aim of the present paper is to establish the hypothesis that the inner world of Jesus Christ is externalized in the Gospel of Matthew. The method employed here is the intertextuality, comparing Matthew with its sources, but with an underlying psychological terminology and concept behind. Yet, we are not going to apply any specific psychological model or perspective in interpreting the inner thought of the Jesus in Matthew, which would be a kind of postulation than textual exegesis.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that the results could contribute a bit to the understanding of the personality of Jesus in Matthew and further the Jesus of history at a later stage.

The Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew may or may not be identical with the Jesus who lived in history [Jesus of history]. As a matter of fact, any written source about a historical person, or this Jesus of history, may or may not have recorded his personality accurately, be intended or unintended; yet each written source about him does inevitably create an association or image about his personality.<sup>2</sup> This has an underlying assumption that the Jesus of history did have his own personality trails, no matter whether there was such a concept in the ancient time or not.<sup>3</sup>

As a general consensus among scholars today, Matthew [be the author or redactor] utilizes some sources [Mark, Q, M] in writing his Gospel. The image of Jesus' personality thus created in the Gospel of Matthew [MtEv] is to be different from those of its sources if Matthew does change some presentation of the Jesus from them. We attempt to show that the image of Jesus [or his inner thought] in MtEv is externalized if compared to its source.

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<sup>1</sup> An Obvious example of applying psychological model to understand Jesus is Fritz Kunkel: *The Creation Continues – a Psychological Interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew* [New York: C. Scribner's, <sup>2</sup>1946; = German edition: *Die Schöpfung Geht Weiter* ..... Konstanz: F. Bahn, 1957]. He applies the Jungian psychology to interpret the Jesus' baptism and temptation in Matthew. See also John A. Sanford, ['Kunkel's Psychology and the Bible', in Sanford ed.: *Fritz Kunkel : Selected Writings -- edited with an Introduction and Commentary* [New York/ Ramsey: Paulist, 1984] 333-52.

<sup>2</sup> It is beyond our limits here to discuss the oral transmission.

<sup>3</sup> Even though psychology traces its origin back to the ancient Greek philosophy, it is a modern disciple of knowledge.

In the following, we shall first discuss Jesus' Baptism and Temptation, the two events immediately prior to his public ministry. Having established the characteristics of the image of Jesus in MtEv, we will further discuss the implication for our understanding of the Jesus of history today.

## II)

The most eye-catching characteristic of Matthew's redaction in Jesus' pre-ministry preparation is the dialogue in each of the two events, where Mark only narrates their progressions. Jesus' dialogue, whether with John the Baptist or the Devil, represents his thinking, concept, value and philosophy, at least, in the Matthean story level. Matthew brings them forth so as to lay down the future direction of Jesus' ministry in the rest of the Gospel. In Mt 16:1; 19:3; and 22:34f, the religious leaders tempt Jesus by asking him questions, like the Devil here does.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, we could still discern some particular personality trails while Matthew shapes his Jesus. Before going into the details of the two events one by one, we shall first discuss the narrative framework:

### A) The Narrative Framework of Jesus Baptism and Temptation

Let's begin with the very end of Jesus Temptation, and at the turn point of Jesus' public ministry [Mk 1:14 // Mt 4:12].

1. Before opening a new section, Mark concludes it by reporting John's imprisonment, and thereafter Jesus withdrew into Galilee. He connects the two events in a chronological sequence [Μετὰ δὲ τὸ παραδοθῆναι ..... ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.....; Mk 1:14]. Matthew uses the same material as Mark, except adding the aorist participle [Ἀκούσας]. In so doing, the connection of these two events in MtEv is not merely chronologically. They are now closely related to each other by the subject, Jesus: 'having heard that....., Jesus withdrew.....' [Mt 4:12]. By introducing this connection of the two events, Matthew at the same time brings forth a possible reason for Jesus' withdrawal, that is, its previous event -- the news about John's imprisonment. In Mark, there is hardly any possible causality between Jesus' withdrawal and John's imprisonment. However, the Matthean Jesus [Jesus in MtEv] did know John's imprisonment prior to his withdrawal.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Davies/ Allison, I: 355.

<sup>5</sup> Our assertion is discerned from the literary of the text, which may or may not directly correspond to the historical event. David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979): 59, makes a similar remark to Jesus' Baptism, which belongs to the redactors' use of 'traditional motifs and ideas belonging to what we would call 'disclosure situations' than to Jesus' own testimony to his actual, historical experience.'

Similar direction is found in MtEv versus the Gospel of Mark in the two events. Matthew redacts the finite verbs twice as the infinitive of the Greek literary device into the beginning of each event, which expresses the purpose of the subject.<sup>6</sup>

2. In Mark 1:9, the description of Jesus' arrival and his baptism [ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς ..... καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη] are two separable and distinguishable sentences [or phrases] although connecting by the conjunction 'καὶ/and'. Yes, the nature of the two sentences makes a logical sequence: Jesus went there and he was baptized. Matthew, nevertheless, redacts [τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ] and articulates it as the reason for Jesus' appearance in Jordan to John [Mt 3:13]. The Matthean Jesus knows what he is going to do in Jordan.<sup>7</sup> This Jesus 'is determined and will not be dissuaded by the Baptist's protest'.<sup>8</sup>
3. In Mark 1:12f, the narrative of Jesus' being in the desert and tempted [τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκβάλλει ..... καὶ ἦν ..... πειραζόμενος] are again, as the previous event, two separable and distinguishable sentences connecting by the conjunction 'καὶ/and'. The nature of the two sentences makes also a logical sequence: Jesus is passively being driven out into the desert and is being tempted there by the Devil. The present participle [πειραζόμενος] may even suggest that Jesus was being tempted continuously through out the whole 40 days [without the nights?]. Matthew redacts and modifies this present participle as infinitive [πειρασθῆναι], and thus articulates the temptation as the reason for Jesus' being in the desert [infinitive of purpose; Mt 4:1]. Similar to the baptismal redaction, the Matthean Jesus knows what he is going to do in the wilderness.<sup>9</sup>
4. So one can easily observe that Matthew narrates and expresses his Jesus' motivation and/or thought in the whole framework of these two preparation events for Jesus' public ministry, where Mark does not. If the two events are thus related, this allows room for readers to imagine that Jesus might also need time for his incubation digesting what he has received from the heavenly vision. The connection of the two events makes psychological sense. Jesus' vision could have

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<sup>6</sup> Blass, F. and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, <sup>14</sup> 1976), § 390: 'The infinitive of purpose'. (1) In the NT it has become common again [from Homer] in a wide sphere with a variety of verbs of motion, and is the equivalent of a final clause.

<sup>7</sup> The place Nazareth in 3:13 omitted [// Mark 1:9] is to be understood as Jesus grew up there before going to the river Jordan [2:23].

<sup>8</sup> Davies/ Allison, I: 321

<sup>9</sup> While highlighting Kunkel's importance, Sanford 338, writes, 'Satan personifies the self-serving motives of the egocentric Ego. With most of us, our Ego-serving motives are unconscious to us and this makes up our truly dark side. In the case of Jesus, according to the story of the temptations, he was able to make this dark side of his Ego conscious and in this way could keep it from destroying his ministry.'

made him highly inflated. This applies to all people. Psychologically ‘inflation’ is an egocentric state that can cause a person to make more (or less!) of oneself than is correct.<sup>10</sup> The redaction of the aorist participle [Ἀκούσας] in the narrative shows that Matthew wants to relate the two events: Jesus’ withdrawal and John’s imprisonment. Matthew does not further tell how the two are related, but it is clear that the Matthean Jesus does have the knowledge about John’s imprisonment before his withdrawal. Matthew puts forth Jesus’ knowledge [something in his mind] to the readers.

#### B) Jesus Baptism in MtEv [3:13-17 // Mk 1:9-11]

Now we are going to analyze the content of the two events one by one. And we shall begin with Jesus Baptism, in which there are two main points of interest in this text, the dialogue and baptismal scene:

##### 1. The Baptismal Dialogue [Mt 3:14f]

The most distinctive feature to be noted here is that Matthew introduces Jesus’ dialogue with John before his baptism of Mark’s version. But why? What kind of teaching/ educational purpose does Matthew have, as he emphasizes so strongly on teaching [e.g., the five teaching blocks, the great commission]? Above all, the fundamental question should be: what kind of baptism is John preaching?

According to Mark [1: 4f], John the Baptist urged the people, probably Jews, coming from Jerusalem and Judea to repent by confessing their sins. He baptized them in the river Jordan, with the baptism for the forgiveness of sins. What would Christians think of Jesus’ baptism by John? Does it imply that Jesus had also confessed his sins and had the necessity to receive the baptism for the forgiveness of his own sins? This question or query could well be raised if one knows Jesus’ baptism by John.<sup>11</sup> And it has to be addressed especially when a Christian community, like the Matthean one, is practicing baptism as a kind of identity marker for its membership.

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<sup>10</sup> Sanford 336, thinks further that if Jesus succumbed to inflation, his mission would have been destroyed.

<sup>11</sup> Some scholars do not feel comfortable with this question of Jesus’ sinfulness. For example, Davies and Allison [W. D. Davies & D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC 1,1; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988) 321-323.] collect eight possible explanations for Jesus’ accepting John’s baptism, and reject only one reason or option that Jesus could be sinful; but surprisingly out of dogmatic ground. F. Kunkel: [33-35 of German edition] thinks that Jesus did confess during his baptism, which is marked as the turning point of his life. Craig A. Evans, ‘Historical Jesus Studies and the Gospel of Matthew’ in: *Methods for Matthew* [Methods in Biblical Interpretation; Cambridge et al.: CPU, 2009] 118-154 does use Jesus confession during baptism as the concrete example illustrating the Criterion of embarrassment for critically evaluating the authentic Jesus of history, 140.

Among the canonical Gospels, MtEv is the only one that chooses to allow the Jesus in the narrative to explicate himself. Jesus himself must be the most suitable one to give the definite and decisive answer to his own baptism and to its implication whether he be sinful. Prior to the dialogue introduced, Matthew has already made an important move, that is, to obliterate the phrase [εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν], the predicate of John's baptism, and relocates it to the context of the Eucharist, attiring it with some mystical color. Such a literary change does eradicate any possible allusion of Jesus' sinfulness arising from John's baptism. The practice of Christian baptism remained at least a criterion of joining the community behind MtEv in terms of sociological function.

In Jesus' dialogue with John, John first expresses his worthlessness to baptize him; their seniority is to be reversed. This valuation about John was probably established in the post Easter period, after people had recognized Jesus' significance and role superseding John's.<sup>12</sup> Only after Jesus' allowance could John baptize him.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the Matthean Jesus by his own nature does not have any need to be baptized at all. Jesus answers with a twofold explanation: 'it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness'. Jesus' action is merely to meet these requirements. And more important is that he wants to do so in order to set up an example for [ἡμῶν/us] to follow.

The word and thence the theme of righteousness is a redaction of Matthew, which appears only in MtEv among the canonical Gospels.<sup>14</sup> As a condition of entering the kingdom of heaven, the Matthean Jesus demands his audience, and subsequently Matthew's audience, to do righteousness better than that of the Scribes and Pharisees (5:20). The righteousness in Pauline letters is different from that in MtEv, in which it describes a way to be followed (21:32).<sup>15</sup> The word [ἡμῶν/us] is also not to be thought of only including both Jesus and John, although Matthew describes as if there were only these two persons in the scene.<sup>16</sup> Grammatically, the pronoun 'ἡμῶν' can be of two persons, but the meaning in the context does not permit so. There are two main reasons: (i) John is not baptized by Jesus immediately, so that both John and Jesus fulfilled this requirement; (ii) it does not make sense to say that it is fitted for Jesus and John to fulfill all righteousness, whereas the others do not need to do so. Obviously, Jesus' example of

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<sup>12</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Jesus* [C.B. Hedrick & F. C. Grant transl; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1949] 77; compare further Davies/Allison *Matthew* 1-7: 323; O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 71-80; Eric K C Wong, 'Was Jesus' without sin? -- An Inquiry into Jesus' Baptism and the Redaction of the Gospels', *Asia Journal of Theology* 11 (1997) 128-39.

<sup>13</sup> Cullmann, *Baptism*, 18-20, further thinks that Jesus' baptism typified his death (Mark 10:38 and its parallel).

<sup>14</sup> In Matt 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32 except once in the Magnificat in Luke 1:75.

<sup>15</sup> Only in the conceptual level could R. Mohrlang, [*Matthew and Paul – a Comparison of Ethical Perspectives* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984)] say that the concept of righteousness of Matthew and Paul does not oppose each other.

<sup>16</sup> So Davies/Alison 325.

being baptized is set up for others, the followers of Jesus, the Christians in the next generations.<sup>17</sup>

Jesus' dialogue with John so introduced does not only settle the query whether Jesus be sinful arising from his baptism, but it also transcends the query into a positive didactics, appealing the audience to fulfill all righteousness. Only the thinking of Jesus is so expressed can Matthew gain authority sufficient to achieve his aim.

## 2. The Baptismal Scene [Mt 3:16f // Mk 1:10f]

The baptismal scenes in Mark and Matthew, except some wordings, are basically the same: after Jesus has received John's baptism, he sees the heavenly open and hears a voice there from. However, there are three redaction changes, which make its implications different from Mark's. They are: [ἰδοὺ /behold] from [εἶδεν /he saw]; [ἰδοὺ /behold] insertion; and [οὗτός ἐστιν /this is] from [σὺ εἶ /you are]. We shall begin with the last one.

a) [οὗτός ἐστιν /this is] from [σὺ εἶ /you are]

According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus hears a voice from heaven, 'you are [σὺ εἶ] my beloved son'. This is a direct speech addressing Jesus. Matthew changes this direct speech to an indirect speech, 'this is [οὗτός ἐστιν] my beloved son', whereas Luke keeps Mark's direct speech. An indirect speech has an introductory function and purpose. The Matthean redaction clearly conveys the message that now the heaven announces and introduces Jesus as the beloved son of God.<sup>18</sup> Some scholars further suggest a public theophany and testimony to Jesus.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Similarly, E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (KEK, Sonderband; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958) 50-51, thinks that Jesus did not alone fulfil all righteousness in the baptism, but the baptism was rather an example of Jesus' fulfilling righteousness. Also G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* (FRLANT 82; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 180. For further discussion on the understanding of "to fulfil all righteousness", see J. P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel* (Anelecta Biblica 71; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1976) 76-80.

<sup>18</sup> So, both Ulrich Luz's and Davies/Allison's extensive commentaries on Matthew note that this change of the speeches 'makes the event more public' [Davies/Allison: 339], particularly, 'to John the Baptist and to the crowd', and consequently to the Christian community behind the Gospel of Matthew' [Luz: 214]. Luz further explains that the subtle change of introductory speech in Matthew corresponds to a theme in Matthew, 'God with us' [Matt 1:23; 28:20].

<sup>19</sup> Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999) 134, follows John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel – Theological Inquiries* (New York: Paulist, 1979) 58. There are nevertheless different voices as to whether the audience did see and hear the vision, see for examples, C. B. E. Cranfield, 'The Baptism of Our Lord – A Study of St. Mark 1.9-11', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8 (1955) 53-63, here 58. Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision – Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) 41, n.19. Ben, III Witherington, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990) 150f.

This direct speech at the beginning, which is connected to but contrast to Mark 9:7 and 15:39, starts the whole literary construction of the Messianic secret in Mark under William Wrede's theory in 1901. This Mark keeps the inner world of Jesus Christ to himself, in particular, his messiahship or God's sonship especially at the beginning of the narrative. The basic framework of Wrede's classical theory on the Messianic Secret cannot be maintained here in Matthew.<sup>20</sup> The private and direct address to Jesus in this statement in Mark is made public now in Matthew.

b) [ἰδοῦ /behold ... εἶδεν /he saw] from [εἶδεν /he saw]

According to Mark, Jesus alone sees [third singular aorist] the heaven open prior to the voice from heaven addressed him directly, and he sees the spirit descending into [εἰς] him. From the literary perspective, the third singular verb says merely that the subject, Jesus, sees; it does not tell whether others see or not.<sup>21</sup> Yet, the focus remains on the subject.

Now, Matthew changes the [εἶδεν /he saw] in Mark to [ἰδοῦ /behold] – 'behold the heavens are open'; Matthew then adds the [εἶδεν /he saw] prior to the descending of the spirit on [ἐπὶ] Jesus. This [ἰδοῦ /behold] is a non-Greek element often with Semitic origin, and expresses 'solemn and dignified style', so it has 'an interjection with acute accent'.<sup>22</sup> It could hardly make sense to say that this [ἰδοῦ /behold] is designed merely for Jesus, or both Jesus and John exclusively.<sup>23</sup> The very nature of this verb is to arouse the attention of the readers, no matter be it in the level of the primary, intended, or interested readership, which corresponds to the characters in the

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<sup>20</sup> William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* [J. C. G. Greig transl.; Cambridge/ London: James Clarke, 1971; German original 1901] proposed that the thrice schematic sayings, 'son of God' in the whole Gospel of Mark, form the basic framework of the messianic secret, starting from the heavenly voices: 'you are my beloved son' at the beginning of the narrative [Mark 1:11]; to the closing of the first part of Jesus' public ministry, 'this is my beloved son' [Mark 9:7]; and immediately a human voice after Jesus' death, 'this is the son of God' [Mark 15:39]. For further discussion, see George Strecker, 'Zur Messiasgeheimnistheorie im Markusevangelium', *The New Testament Message* [Studia Evangelica 3: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 88; Berlin: Akademischer Verlag, 1964] 87 – 104; also Ulrich Luz, 'Das Geheimnismotiv und die markinische Christologie', *ZNW* 56 [1965] 9-30; Ulrich Luz, 'Das Geheimnismotiv und die markinische Christologie', *ZNW* 56 [1965] 9-30; U. B. Müller, 'Die Christologische Absicht des Markusevangelium und die Verklärungsgeschichte' *ZNW* 64 (1973) 193; also Heikki Räisänen, *The 'Messianic Secret' in Mark's Gospel* [C. Tuckett transl.; Studies of the New Testament of Its World; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990].

<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, some still want to say that the characters in Mark do not know the descent of the Spirit at this point. Werner H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 18f,

<sup>22</sup> Blass, F. and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, <sup>14</sup>1976), §4 and §101 under ὁράω.

<sup>23</sup> We must note that "ἡμῖν" / for us' is not designed for one person as it is a plural pronoun. From the literary perspective, this pronoun can refer to both Jesus and John. However, the context does not allow so: John is the one who offers baptism, and not the one who receives it. So, John cannot be served as a model [as Jesus does]. As a result, this 'ἡμῖν' is to be understood as referring to general readership or audience.

story, to the first audience of the Gospel, or to the audience today respectively. Therefore, all audience notes the heavens open and Jesus whom sees the spirit descending on him.

c) [ἰδοὺ /behold] insertion

In this immediate following verse, Matthew inserts this [ἰδοὺ] again and puts it in front of the voice of the heaven. If Mark's wording [φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν] could allow two possibilities, either Jesus alone hears the voice, or the audience in general also do, Matthew's redaction [ἰδοὺ], as discussed above, arouses the attention of not only Jesus, but other surrounding people as well.

At this point, it is interesting to note the position of Kingsbury, who strongly maintained that Jesus' baptism was a 'private affair', but not a public one.<sup>24</sup> The main clue he presented was the use of [τότε/ then] in Mt 3:13. He believed that this temporal adverb functioned to remove chronologically this narrative from its previous one; the crowd surrounded John was no longer present during Jesus' baptism. And there was also no reference to the audience at all in the entire text Mt 3:13-17. As he himself also admitted that the use of [τότε/ then] is imprecise, we can deliberately and differently say that Jesus appears in the Jordan while John is just in the midst of completing his work as Matthew describes previously in 3:1-12. Similarly there can also be no time lapse between the two events. If the phrase, 'in those days 3:1', does signify a separation of the present text from the previous one chronologically, then the [τότε/ then] in 3:13 is a relative mild conjunction for the purpose, and is not to be over-emphasized for its clear cut distinction here.<sup>25</sup> Besides, we can also interpret the twice use of [παραγίεται] both for John's and Jesus' appearance in the river Jordan as creating a similar atmosphere for both events, but there must not necessarily be any chronological implication at all. Yes, Kingsbury is correct in noting that there is no reference to the audience in Jesus' baptism. However, not mentioned does not necessarily mean that there is no audience at all [an argument from silence]. If the main clue of him, the [τότε/ then], has other interpretation, then there could well be audience behind the scene of Jesus' baptism.

Kingsbury had two more points for insisting Jesus' baptism as a private affair, 'Jesus

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<sup>24</sup> Jack D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 13f.

<sup>25</sup> J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of the New Testament Greek 3* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1963) 341, with Aramaic origin usage; Matthew uses this adverb 90 times while the sum of the other three canonical Gospels is only 52 times.

Blass, F. and A. Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, <sup>14</sup> 1976), § 105 and §459 (2): the main function of this adverb of time is 'zur Einführung des zeitlichen Nachfolgenden', which is slightly different from the English version.

sees' and 'this is'. He thought that the scene of the descending of the spirit in Matthew was 'more explicit still than Mark in restricting sight of it to Jesus alone'. I am not quite sure what does it mean; and I simply take the liberty to suppose his interpretation as that the noun 'Jesus' is located nearer to the verb 'he sees' in Mt 3:16 than that in Mk 1:9f. But, the introduction of the name 'Jesus' here has another more important function for clarifying right after the previous dialogue between Jesus and John, where two subjects occur. This introduction is at all unnecessary for Mark because he keeps the subject unchanged starting from the beginning till the very end of the whole baptismal narrative. Perhaps we may even say that Mark keeps not only Jesus' sight, but he also persists Jesus as the only subject throughout the whole baptismal scene. Moreover, as discussed above, we cannot simply take it granted that he 'alone' sees, without any surrounding people. Furthermore, the introduction of the 'behold' has the function to arouse the attention of the audience, but not Jesus in the story.

The last point Kingsbury raised was the 'this is'. He regarded Matthew's amendment functioned 'to assimilate his account of the Baptism to that of the Transfiguration'. In doing so, he overlooks the importance of considering its own immediate context. He ignored the basic difference between direct speech 'you are' in Mark and indirect speech 'this is' modified now in Matthew. This indirect speech 'this is my beloved son', with the acute accent, 'behold', serve to introduce this Jesus to the public, as we discussed above.

So, Kingsbury's exegesis here is to be relativized. Further considering his omission of the twice use of [ἰδοὺ /behold], which Matthew alone redacts, we could hardly regard Kingsbury's assertion of Jesus' baptism as a 'private affair', but not a 'public one', is correct.

As a remark, Matthew redacts these three wordings in the baptismal scene. Although the changes are relatively light in the literary level, their meaning adding together is significant. This redaction builds up a solid expression to externalize the Jesus in Matthew: the Jesus in Mark seems alone to see, to hear and to receive the direct speech of the heaven. If Wrede is correct, this vision applies to Jesus alone privately in Mark. With the redaction changes, Matthew externalizes this 'private event' to the public, not simply to the characters in the story level, but more important to the intended readers. As a result, the original private event or experience of Jesus in Mark becomes now in Matthew a public one, everyone who reads the preparation of Jesus' ministry in MtEv knows that Jesus' vision is made known to all. Or at least, the readers have the association that this event of Jesus was not a private one in his time.

However, why must Matthew make such a redaction? If Wrede has the messianic secret in Mark, what can we have in Matthew? Before answering these questions, let us first consider the temptation narrative.

### C) Jesus' Temptation in MtEv [3:13-17 // Mk 1:9-11]

Mark redacts Jesus' Temptation immediately after his baptism and connects the two events by his literary device, [εὐθύς/ immediately].<sup>26</sup> For such an arrangement, Mark presents a spiritual reason by introducing the 'spirit' who actively leads him to the desert. Matthew, however, suppresses this reason by putting Jesus as the subject and the changing the spirit as the genitive of agent. Though still led by the Devil, the Matthean Jesus determines to be tempted there, which expresses clearly the motivation of Jesus himself, [πειρασθῆναι] the infinitive of purpose as discussed in I-A-2 above. In other words, Jesus wants to be tempted in the desert. That Matthew articulates this inner thinking of Jesus is also seen in the following clarification about Jesus' hunger from Mark's unclear record – Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights inclusively, and then he was hungry. This provides a good preparation for the Devil's first temptation testing Jesus.<sup>27</sup> Why does Matthew want to alter his Jesus to have the subjective role against Mark's passive one? We suggest two reasons: (1) Out of Matthew's arrangement, the need of the human Jesus going to the wilderness is also revealed. (2) Matthew takes this opportunity to introduce Jesus' basic thought, concept and belief to the audience by integrating the three dialogues between Jesus and the Devil of Q.

#### 1. Jesus' Self Reflection

Jesus receives the heavenly message, 'This is my beloved son' in Matthew 3:17. What then with this message? It is natural to raise the question from the human perspective, 'has this Jesus asked himself whether he is really the son of God, whether he really knows this path leading to the martyrdom, and whether he really wants to step on this religious path in serving God?' It is natural for a person to try different means in order to ascertain that one has received the authentic calling of God. Jesus goes to the desert in order to consolidate and incubate what he has just received, 'the son of God'. In the Old Testament, heroic figures like Moses [Ex 34:28], Elijah [1King 19:8] have also gone through similar process.

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<sup>26</sup> Karl L. Schmidt, *Die Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu -- literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919; Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1964).

<sup>27</sup> See further D. F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus critically examined* [New York and London: 1892; 1840 German original] 256-8.

The canonical Gospels seldom narrate the inner struggle of Jesus while making decision.<sup>28</sup> But now, Matthew does. As Luke, he introduces the three dialogues between Jesus and the Devil from the Q-logion (Mt 4:1-11 // Lk 4:1-13).<sup>29</sup> He thus creates room for the purpose. The content reflects the inner thought and struggles of Jesus, and this is the purpose behind the temptation of the Devil.<sup>30</sup>

When Jesus is in the wilderness, there is no other person with him, except some wild beasts. He is alone. We can image that it is the time for one to face oneself, one's inner self when one alone is. What happened in the past, what deep down in one's heart is and even into those things that no another person has ever known, all these come forth in one's mind. More important is naturally the recent event.<sup>31</sup> For Jesus, he has just received the vision from heaven. Readers can easily create the image that Jesus must have thought about the vision during the forty days alone in the wilderness. He must also have thought about whether he shall live on with the vision or neglect it. He must have thought about in what way he will be fulfilling his mission of God, as a suffering servant leading his martyrdom, or perhaps as the expected Jewish Messiah, who will then restore and establish the Jewish nation with military and political power. He must also have thought about if he himself should do so, if he has the ability to do so, if he really wants to do so. Although these are hypothetical imagination, Matthew does, so as to create room for such imagination by assigning the appearance of the Devil after Jesus' fasten for 40 days.

After this Matthean Jesus has gone through this consolidation period, the tempter comes for the tests. Matthew well articulates different layers of his being in the desert. Now we shall come to the content of the temptation itself.

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<sup>28</sup> Indeed, such kind of narrative needs much space and is also not the purpose of the Gospels. A rare exemption is Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Mk 14:32 //), which narrates his inner struggle and his wish that the cup of suffering could be removed from him.

<sup>29</sup> It is generally noted that the sequence of the last two dialogues are not the same in Matthew and Luke. The method of Redaction Criticism could not yet offer a convincing solution to as which one represents the original order – [1] Matthew emphasizes much on 'mountain'; and the last dialogue of his is also placed at the end; so the sequence of Matthew is to be regarded as secondary. However, similar situation applies also in Luke. Luke emphasizes heavily on 'temple/ Jerusalem'; and the last dialogue of his is also placed at the end; so the sequence of Luke, similar to Matthew, is to again be regarded as secondary. Gerd Theissen offers a new solution from the perspective of the social background of the Gospels, and that the Matthew's sequence be original. *The Gospels in Context – Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis/ Edinburgh: Fortress/ T & T Clark, 1991/ 1992) 206-8, n.14.

<sup>30</sup> Why does Jesus' fasting take 40 days? There is much discussion about the 40 day. Perhaps the most related idea is the number 40, with which one may associate the Jewish ancestors' 40 years circling around in the wilderness, or like the example of Moses in Ex 24:18; 34:28; Dtn 9:9, 11, 18, 25; 10:10. See Luz, I: 224; Davies/ Alison, I: 355; Keener: 136. It is enough for us here to note that the 40 days signify a long period of time.

<sup>31</sup> Anyone who has experience in meditation or contemplation can assure this saying.

## 2. Affirmation of Jesus' own Belief and Value

All the three dialogues of Jesus with the Devil reveal the inner thought of Jesus right after his vision and immediately before his ministry. We shall discuss them one by one:

### (1) Do not be shaken by materialistic – Turn the Stones to Loaves

	<p>Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"</p>	<p>Matthew 4:1-4  // Luke 4:1-4</p>
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There are three levels of temptations to Jesus when the Devil says, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' First, it is on the materialistic level, to have food while one is hungry. Those who have tasted starving or famine, know what these sufferings mean. Everyone knows how important food to sustain our physical life. During or after the fasting for the forty days, Jesus must have felt hungry and wanted to eat something. On this level, the Devil tempts Jesus to turn the stones loaves.

On the second level, the Devil's temptation queries whether Jesus really has the ability and confident to perform miracles. If Jesus has been doing miracles before the Devil's query, this level of temptation can be made void because Jesus can certainly do what he has been doing. However, we do not know whether Jesus has done miracles before or not. Luke among other canonical Gospels is the only one that reports one or two event of Jesus' childhood, but there is no hint about this ability of Jesus. If Jesus has never performed miracles before, the Devil's challenge on this second level is sever. Would Jesus have the confidence that he can 'suddenly' perform a miracle? The first experience, from nothing to being, is certainly difficult.

Following the track of this second level, the third on is the wording of the Devil, and also on a larger context of the temptation narrative. The challenge of the Devil happens right after Jesus has received the vision from heaven telling him to be the son of God. Now the challenge reads, 'if you are the son of God.....' At a first glance, the challenge does not directly query his status as son of God; but it indeed uses a trick to query his status. We can image the scenario: if Jesus cannot change the stones to loaves, disregarding whether he has the confidence or ability to do so, what would

the Devil say and what would Jesus think of himself? The Devil would laugh and Jesus would doubt his sonship. If Jesus really has not performed any miracles before, and if he has just learned from the vision of the heaven that he is the son of God, then the Devil's challenge is in actual fact sever!<sup>32</sup>

Jesus' answer, 'One does not live by bread alone .....' strongly and pin pointedly to the three fold challenge. First, Jesus does not deny, but admit that it is necessary for human beings to have food in order to sustain their lives. However, they (on the level of thinking, will power, conscience, etc.) should not be limited by materialistic, and thus loose their direction and goal of life. Second, Jesus stands firm for his position, 'A person lives ..... by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' This is more important than that Jesus can or cannot turn the stones to loafs, or perform any miracles. Finally, Jesus determines that his establishment as son of God does not depend on his ability of performing miracles. Alone when he observes and does the will of God, he is then the beloved son of God. In other words, his establishment as son of God does not need any external evidences or proofs, but his own determination of the will and his continuous practice of God's words.

(2) Do not be shaken by other interpretation of the Scriptures – Jump down from the Pinnacle of the Temple.

	<p><b>Matthew 4:5-7</b> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"  <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"</p>	<p>Matthew 4:5-7  // Luke 4:9-12  (the second and third order of the dialogue are not the same in Matthew and Luke.)</p>
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The Devil now brings Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem. Since Jesus has used the Scripture to have passed the first test, Devil then employs the same strategy to tempt him again. He begins with the same words, 'if you are the son of God .....' Devil quotes the scripture, saying that 'the Lord will command his angels ..... to protect you', and challenges if Jesus dares throw himself down from the pinnacle. This challenge is two folded. On one hand, if Jesus hesitates or even is not willing to do so, he would have no confidence to the words of the Lord. On the

<sup>32</sup> At this point, we can also deduce from this temptation narrative; it assumes that Jesus has not performed miracles before. If it does not assume so, then what the Devil asks Jesus to do, is merely one more routine work that Jesus has always been doing. Or on the other hand, If Jesus does have performed miracles before, the whole temptation would be either weak or cannot be established.

other hand, if Jesus does jump down, he throws himself into a dilemma situation. He is testing God whether God will protect him in anyway if he throws himself down, or otherwise he will be hurt or even dead. Jesus will then pose his challenge to God to stand on his decision of throwing himself down . We all know that God is himself also a subject. He may not necessarily follow what we want him to do. He can have his own determination if he helps or not in a particular situation.

Replying directly to such a critical question of the Devil, Jesus will enter into a dilemma for both yes and no are not appropriate. The best way to tackle dilemma is perhaps to deal with the presupposition of the dilemma itself, that is, the test to God. Jesus answers ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’. It is simple and unambiguous. He is not shaken by other’s interpretation of the Scriptures, but he has his faith and direction. This shows that the Matthean Jesus possesses the wisdom after going through the consolidation [incubation?] process of his sonship.

(3) Value: the two dimensions of the Present and Future World – Worshipping the Devil

	<p>Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"</p>	<p>Matthew 4:8-10 // Luke 4:5-8</p>
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At last, the Devil tests him by giving all the kingdoms and their glory if Jesus would fall down and worships him. How can The Devil’s third temptation sustain from the perspective of Jesus’ divinity? How can materialistic world test this divine Jesus at all? However, from the perspective of Jesus’ humanity, the test is solemn in the Jewish context at that time under the Roman governance.

The Synoptic Gospels, especially Mark, pose the sonship of Jesus almost equivalent to the status as the Jewish Messiah. In other words, the vision from heaven to Jesus represents the call for him to be the Messiah, who would be taking up the role to lead the Jewish people to restore their nation from the Romans. Indeed, we can see that this thinking is also shared by Jesus’ disciples, as the narrative of the Synoptic Gospels goes on their plots (e.g., Mk 10:3-37 //). While approaching Jerusalem the capital, James and John go to Jesus and request, let them to sit at the right and left seats when Jesus will be acquiring the glory. The request is certainly of the glory in the world, but not in the future world. According to the narrative, Jesus’ closest

disciples still do not understand the real purpose of Jesus entering Jerusalem for sufferings and death at the very end of his ministry. Jesus rebukes them clearly that they do not know what they are requesting (Mk10:38 //)!

Why should the disciples still be so misunderstanding at this very end of Jesus' ministry? Jesus wants to be a spiritual Messiah, but not a kingly one. Or has Jesus ever shared with them his vision about this kingly Messiah? Have Jesus never considered during the 40 days in the wilderness whether he would have become the kingly Messiah? which would certainly involve the cruelty of blood and death. In this vein, Jesus' falling down would have saved numerous lives for the cause. If Jesus does think about or even struggle against to be the kingly Messiah, The Devil's challenge by offering him the kingdoms and their glory is indeed rigorous: Jesus does not need to go through the entire tedious and hard journey, properly including bloody revolution, and yet the future success was of no direct guarantee, in order to be the Messiah respectively the son of God, or even king of the Jews and all over the world.<sup>33</sup> The challenge is not merely on the desire of power, but also on his attitude towards human lives.

However, Jesus determines his religious role for achieving his mission in the world, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' He does not want to be the king of this temporal world under the Devil, but the eternal one of God, to be the savior of all people in the world. This represents exactly the direction of Jesus' value, as well as for Christians today: This world is not the ultimate goal of our lives, but it is God and his kingdom that transcend all over this world, with which Jesus' followers can overcome difficulty of life.

### III)

If the arguments of the above discussion on Jesus' Baptism and Temptation could be acceptable, then Matthew has brought forth Jesus' knowledge and determination of being baptized and being tempted. Meanwhile, the value and religious belief deep down in this Matthean Jesus' mind are thus revealed to the readers. Psychologists would regard that this Jesus has gone through a 'new creation phase'.<sup>34</sup> This Jesus is thus made more expressive or transparent than that in Mark. By doing so, Matthew shows us more what he thinks about Jesus' characteristics, or his personality in terms

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<sup>33</sup> Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context – Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, 207, sees this last dialogue has a three fold similarities to the Gaius Caligula crisis in the year 40 CE, namely, 'the prostration before the ruler of the world, who has the power to bestow kingdoms; to worship this ruler is a direct offense against the worship of the one and only God.'

<sup>34</sup> Fritz Kunkel, p.47 of German version.

of modern psychology, be it authentic historical or not. And we call it the externalization of Jesus Christ's inner world as in MtEv.

Our study assumes that the Jesus of history had his own personality traits, even though there might not yet have such a lucid concept in the ancient world. And they might not thus been articulated in the Gospels, or retrospectively in the deliverances or traditions, be oral or written. It would be ideal to figure out exactly the personality of the Jesus who actual lived in history. Pupils of the Historical Jesus Research know that it is well nigh possible. We have not concentrated our discussion on the level of Jesus himself directly. What we have done is to have discerned, how this figure in history was shaped in about half century after his death, on the text level of Matthew's redaction on Jesus' Baptism and Temptation.<sup>35</sup> The present study has focused on the image of the Jesus as reflected from Matthew's narrative of the two events, which belongs to the historical Jesus research in biblical study and incorporated the modern concept of personality, or psychological types in psychology.<sup>36</sup>

Now we may say that we have the externalized image of Jesus in the narrative of the baptism and temptation in Matthew. If we could continue our study for the whole Gospel of Matthew in this direction, and obtain a consistent image of Jesus, then we may have one aspect of Jesus' personality, as presented by Matthew. Yet, this is a relative image of Jesus compared to Mark's. So we may further have another image of Jesus from Mark implicitly. Both images in Mark and Matthew, which are composed with a time lap of one or two decades, could have discrepancy. These two different images may further help to contribute the postulation, with some more evidences, the personality of the Jesus of history.

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<sup>35</sup> It is understood that there is a huge gap between text and event, respectively the image presented in text and the real image of real life. At this point, we are in line with Theissen & Merz (p.13), 'Therefore any scholarly description of Jesus must begin by presenting the sources on the historical Jesus.'

<sup>36</sup> It seems that such a combination has been less explored in the Historical Jesus Research [at least seen from the discussion by Theissen and Merz, who do not include this psychological perspective in their 'comprehensive guide']. Perhaps a closer work to our proposal is the *Psychology and the Bible* edited by J. H. Ellens and W. G. Rollins, in which James H. Charlesworth's 'Psychobiography: A New and Challenging Methodology in Jesus Research' tried to define this new approach combing the study of the historical Jesus and psychology, in particular the psychobiography. If Charlesworth presents the whole picture of this psychobiography, our research proposal has concentrated on a particular text, the Gospel of Matthew, and to analyze it in detail in the hope to contribute to part of the personality of the Jesus of history. Wayne G. Rollins reports some major works of this specific field and tries to defend and justifies such study by articulating reasons for and by collecting evidences of the change from traditional to psychological study of the bible, and calls this kind of studies the Psychological Biblical Criticism. [Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1999] 65-74.