

Rhetorical Composition and Sources in the Gospel of Thomas

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For many scholars, the advent of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas (*Gos. Thom.*) in New Testament interpretation has substantively changed their view of the emergence and development of early Christian tradition.¹ The substantive reason is the unusual status of gospel tradition in this text. On the one hand, over half of the sayings in *Gos. Thom.* are like sayings in the canonical gospels. On the other hand, in no case are versions of a pericope in the *Gos. Thom.* and any of the canonical gospels exactly alike.

For some scholars, the existence of the *Gos. Thom.* has only added a little supplemental information to our knowledge of early Christianity. For them, nothing substantive has changed. The *Gos. Thom.*, in their view, is the result of an alternative approach to the gospels by some Christians during the second century. Some of these scholars think this alternative approach was primarily a result of Jewish Christian influence, while others consider it to be an orientation toward revealed knowledge that is best called Gnosticism. These scholars are agreed, however, that the *Gos. Thom.* is a later, secondary and derivative gospel. There is, then, nothing substantively new here. Whether the *Gos. Thom.* is the result of a dramatically deconstructive use of the synoptic gospels (e.g., Grant and Freedman) or a collector of sayings from Jewish Christian and/or Gnostic gospels (Gärtner), the canonical gospels alone reveal the manner in which first century Christian tradition emerged, and the *Gos. Thom.* reveals what some Christians did with gospel tradition during the second century.

For other scholars, knowledge of the nature of gospel tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* has substantively changed their view of the emergence and development of first century Christian tradition. After early studies by Oscar Cullmann (1962a, 1962b) and R. McL. Wilson (1960) that suggested the need for a different way of conceptualizing the process that produced the tradition in the *Gos. Thom.*, studies by Hugh Montefiore (1960/61) and Claus Hunno Hunzinger (1960a, 1960b) created the context for a dramatically alternative approach. Montefiore observed that the parables in *Gos. Thom.* do not contain aspects of the same tradition-historical development (like allegorization and addition of generalized comment at the end) as the synoptic gospels. Instead, the parables in *Gos. Thom.* contain the same "kind" of tradition-historical development, but with different results (Patterson 1992: 67).

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The possibility emerges, then, that the parables in the *Gos. Thom.* come out of an early pre-gospel stage of tradition that developed simultaneously in circles of Christianity alongside the circles that produced the synoptic gospels. When Hunziger showed that pericopes in the *Gos. Thom.* neither conjoin sayings in the manner in which Q tradition conjoins them nor adds the secondary elements present in Q tradition, the stage was set for the possibility that tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* had traveled from an early pre-gospel stage through different early Christian circles down to the point where it was written down toward the end of the first century alongside the canonical gospels.

Scholars who were envisioning an alternative mode of development of early Christian tradition needed a substantively different hypothesis for first century gospel tradition, and this emerged with the work of James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester (Robinson and Koester). Building on previous work on Q tradition, which features sayings of Jesus that do not include predictions or rehearsals of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Robinson posited the existence of a genre he called "sayings of the wise," which had a trajectory of existence from the Wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible through Jewish and Hellenistic literature down into the Gnostic literature of the second and third centuries C.E. As this hypothesis has developed during the last two decades, the conclusion has been drawn by a growing number of scholars that the earliest sayings of Jesus contained an eschatological wisdom about the kingdom that did not contain substantive apocalyptic features. As the tradition developed, this eschatological wisdom was simultaneously apocalypticized and gnosticized by different circles within first century Christianity.

Within the last decade, the third quest of the historical Jesus has raised the issue of whether Jesus' eschatological wisdom concerning the Kingdom of God was truly apocalyptic, or whether it was an eschatological wisdom without apocalyptic features that was as open to gnostic development as it was to apocalyptic development. Within this new environment, the issue of orthodoxy versus heresy has returned in the form of apocalypticism versus wisdom. Stevan Davies has emphasized that the *Gos. Thom.* is not gnostic in any genuine sense of the term but has emerged naturally out of wisdom tradition that was in dialogue with an apocalyptic view of this world (1983). Another response has been to emphasize that the eschatological wisdom of Jesus is akin to Cynic perceptions of "royalty" that challenge conventions and institutions of daily life and society (Crossan 1991: 72-88, 421-426; Mack 1993: 191-205; Mack 1995: 39-41). For interpreters who continue to maintain a loyalty to the early twentieth century view that only an apocalyptic Jesus is an orthodox Jesus, these descriptions of wisdom tradition look like an inclusion of heresy in the earliest stages of the Christian tradition. For other interpreters, these descriptions are the logical result of careful investigation of the tradition with insights gained from data available at the end of the twentieth century that was not available at the end of the nineteenth century. In this context, James Robinson appears to have parted ways with his colleague Helmut Koester by arguing that the apocalyptic teaching in the Q tradition is most fully akin to the teaching of the historical Jesus (Robinson 1993). For Robinson, then, most of the wisdom tradition in *Gos. Thom.* is a gnosticizing, and thus a modifying, of the apocalyptic tradition of the historical Jesus, while others see an eschatological wisdom compatible with much in the *Gos. Thom.* at the earliest stages of first century Christian tradition.

In the context of the present debate and disagreement, the question arises whether the view toward "gnostic" wisdom that lies at the foundation of the Robinson/Koester hypothesis really gets at the heart of the development of gospel tradition in the *Gos. Thom.* (cf. Williams). It might help if there were another kind of conversation on the Thomas tradition than

the emphasis on wisdom-apocalyptic-gnostic terminology that has dominated most recent debates. My recommendation is to look at the inner nature of this tradition from a rhetorical approach with a social orientation. The question is if any new light might be shed on the *Gos. Thom.* by shifting away from a literary-historical approach to a socio-rhetorical approach (Robbins 1996a, Robbins 1996b). A socio-rhetorical approach builds on the insights of people like Helmut Koester, John Dominic Crossan, John Sieber, Stephen Patterson and others that there is no truly "scribal" relation between the *Gos. Thom.* and the canonical gospels. Detailed study of the traditions shows that the relation between *Gos. Thom.* and the synoptic gospels is a relation of "oral intertexture" rather than "scribal intertexture" (Robbins 1996a: 97-108; Robbins 1996b: 40-58). It appears, moreover, that the relation of *Gos. Thom.* to apocryphal gospels is as orally constituted as its relation to the synoptic gospels. Here, however, the situation becomes very complex. Extended Greek fragments of the *Gos. Thom.* show that it existed first in Greek, and the fourth century date of the Coptic text found at Nag Hammadi suggests that probably this text is a third, fourth, or fifth edition of one or more Coptic translations. The Coptic version available to us, then, has a thick scribal intertexture both with Greek fragments and with other Gospels written in Coptic. It is natural, then, if the fourth century version of the *Gos. Thom.* available to us contains both scribal variations among other versions of the text and scribal harmonization with other Coptic versions of gospels (cf. Sieber: 68-70). It is all the more remarkable, therefore, how the text has maintained its oral orientation. No scribe has gone through the text "scribalizing" gospel tradition in the manner in which the canonical gospels scribalize it.

Orality as a Social Location in the Gospel of Thomas

An amazing fact about the *Gos. Thom.* is its complete lack of appeal to written text. In contrast to the canonical gospels, the narrator never says, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet" (Mark 1:1), "For so it is written by the prophet" (Matt 2:5), "As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet" (Luke 3:4), or "For these things took place that the writing might be fulfilled" (John 19:36). In addition, the narrator of the *Gos. Thom.* never attributes to Jesus a statement like "Have you never read what David did..." (Mark 2:25), "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone'" (Luke 4:4//Matt 4:4), "This is he of whom it is written ..." (Matt 11:10), "What is written in the law? How do you read?" (Luke 10:26), or "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God'" (John 6:45). All the canonical gospels contain an orientation toward "what is written" both at the level of the narration of the story and in speech attributed to Jesus.

Throughout *Gos. Thom.* the only relation of *Gos. Thom.* sayings to OT text is an oral relation. This is evident, for example, in *Gos. Thom.* 66: Jesus said, "Show me the stone that the builders rejected: that is the cornerstone." Mark 12:10-11, in contrast, reads:

Have you not read this writing: "The stone, which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

In Mark (cf. Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17), Jesus refers to the written status of what he speaks, and comparison with Ps 118:22 shows extended scribal relation to that written text. In *Gos. Thom.*, in contrast, Jesus does not refer to his speech as written text, and the recitation

embeds a brief word string of the biblical text in the manner of proverbial memory and performance. In other words, Gos. Thom. 66 makes no reference to the speech of Jesus as recitation of written text, and the recitation itself exhibits an oral proverbial manner of transmission. The Gos. Thom. version is free from "scribal" influence. The Markan version both attributes to Jesus an interest in its "written" status and the performance of it shows influence of scribal replication of written text.

Throughout the Gos. Thom., this is the relation of the speech of Jesus to word strings in the OT text and other variations in the apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Qumran, etc. In no instance does either the narrator or Jesus refer to any word string as "written" somewhere, and comparison of the wording in the Gos. Thom. shows a free, orally constituted relation to that wording. Another text closely related to written scripture in wording is Gos. Thom. 21:9: "When the crop ripened, that one came quickly with sickle in hand (and) he harvested it." Mark 4:29 has this in a variant form: "But when the crop ripens, quickly he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is ready." Joel 3:13 (LXX: 4:13) reads "Put in the sickle, because the harvest is ready." The Markan text has a close relation to the Joel text. Both are argumentative in nature, with a rationale that supports the reasoning at the beginning of the statement. The Markan version embellishes the Joel version to emphasize the quickness with which the man who planted the grain harvests it. The Thomas text is an oral variant of the Markan text that lacks the argumentative quality of a statement supported by a rationale. The Thomas version correlates the ripening and harvesting with the quick action with the sickle. Transmission of the topic of quickness, then, stands at the center of the Thomas version, rather than transmission of the rationale which stands at the center of the Joel version. The Thomas version, then, is a rhetorical variant of Mark 4:29 with no scribal investment either in the Joel or the Markan version. The Markan version is a scribal variant of the Thomas version, replicating verbatim wording from Joel concerning "putting in the sickle, because the harvest is ready."

No other wording in the Gos. Thom. comes as close to verbatim recitation of OT text as sayings Gos. Thom. 66 and 21:9, and in both instances there is no scribal influence on the Gos. Thom. version that exceeds or even equals a version in a synoptic gospel. Herein we see one of the remarkable differences between the inner texture of the Gos. Thom. and the canonical gospels. Each of the canonical gospels shows a scribal relationship at many points to OT text. This relationship may be "mediated," in the sense that the wording may be coming from some kind of Christian "pesher" or "testimonia" tradition. But in each instance there is an argumentative interest in ancient written testimony, and this interest manifests itself in "scribal" influence from OT text on wording in the text. There is no interest like this in the Gos. Thom. There is, to be sure, knowledge of the prophets, but all the emphasis is on "the speaking of the prophets" and never on "what is written." Thus Gos. Thom. 52:

52 1 His disciples said to him, "Twenty four prophets have spoken in Israel, and they all spoke of you." 2 He said to them, "You have disregarded the living one who is in your presence, and have spoken of the dead."

The twenty four prophets undoubtedly would include Moses and David, from whom come the law and the psalms, but Jesus speaks of them as dead. In contrast, the synoptic gospels speak of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as living (Mark 12:27 par.). In a context where the disciples in the Gos. Thom. show an awareness of the prophets, they emphasize what the prophets have spoken rather than what anyone has written. Jesus' response, in turn,

emphasizes that the speech of the prophets is not a source of life. The prophets are dead. Only the voice of Jesus is a living voice through his sayings which people transmit orally. Only the sayings of the Jesus are "living" sayings " they alone transmit the wisdom of God that can serve as a vehicle for life for people living in this world. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 38:

38 ¹Jesus said, "Often you have desired to hear these sayings that I am speaking to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. ²There will be days when you will seek me and you will not find me."

While the prophets spoke of Jesus, their sayings are not a vehicle for finding Jesus. The only way to find Jesus is through his sayings. Those who hear the sayings of Jesus, then are the agents for other people to find Jesus. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 33:

33 ¹Jesus said, "What you will hear in your ear, proclaim in the ear of the other from your rooftops.

Oral transmission of Jesus' sayings, then, is the means by which people can find life. But they do not find life simply by finding Jesus. Rather, each person must use the sayings of Jesus to come to knowledge of themselves. These sayings come through the speech of leaders to them. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 3:

3 ¹Jesus said, "If your leaders say to you, 'Behold, the kingdom is in heaven', then the birds of heaven will precede you. ²If they say to you, 'It is in the sea', then the fish will precede you. ³Rather, the kingdom is within you and it is outside you. ⁴When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. ⁵But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and you are the poverty.

When leaders speak to them, they need to reflect on what they themselves have heard for the purpose of coming to know themselves. What they must come to know, however, does not simply lie within themselves. It is both inside and outside (Davies 1983). A person must, indeed, understand what is inside, but one must "bring it forth" in order for it to bring life. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 70:

70 ¹Jesus said, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. ²If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within you [will] kill you."

But there is also knowledge about the outside that is important to bring into one's understanding. This knowledge is "public" knowledge " open for discussion and dialogue. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 50:

50 ¹Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.' ²If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.' ³If they say to you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"

It is necessary to understand about a place outside oneself called a place of light. This is where light itself came into being, and this is the place from which every person has come. It is also important to know that one is a child of light, chosen by the living Father. The evidence for this lies in motion and rest, which lies both inside and outside. These topics are open for discussion and dialogue as public knowledge, but the sayings in *Gos. Thom.* do not envision a public "debate" about these topics or any other topics. There is, in fact, no public with which Jesus debates in *Gos. Thom.* There is an awareness of Pharisees and scribes in *Gos. Thom.*, but the sayings are simply statements about them that describe their lack of understanding and ability to lead people into knowledge of life. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 39:

39 ¹Jesus said, "The Pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of knowledge and have hidden them. ²They have not entered, nor have they allowed those who want to enter to do so. ³As for you, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

As a result of their inability to lead others, Jesus also pronounces a "Woe" on the Pharisees. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 102:

102 Jesus said, "Woe to the Pharisees, for they are like a dog sleeping in the manger of cattle, for it neither eats nor [lets] the cattle eat."

The Pharisees themselves, in the perspective of the *Gos. Thom.*, do not seek and find, nor do they help others seek and find. In fact, they do not "let" people seek and find. But Jesus does not engage in public debate with Pharisees and scribes, and there also is no implication that the disciples should or do engage in such debates. Thus, in *Gos. Thom.* Pharisees do not bring issues to Jesus like they do in the canonical gospels. A key example of this is the Thomas version of the pericope about paying taxes to Caesar. In *Gos. Thom.* this is not public debate but discussion within the Christian community. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 100:

100 ¹They [the disciples] showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, "Caesar's people demand taxes from us." ²He said to them, "Give Caesar the things that are Caesar's, ³give God the things that are God's, ⁴and give me what is mine."

The questions that are put to Jesus in *Gos. Thom.* come from disciples, Mary, and Salome. In each instance, the questioners truly seek information. In other words, the questions are not "trick" questions designed to embarrass Jesus in public and to establish an advantage for some public group like Sadducees (who are never mentioned in *Gos. Thom.*), Pharisees, or scribes. Rather, the disciples, Mary, and Salome present questions to Jesus for the purpose of finding Jesus and finding life. Many of their questions are misguided, of course, so Jesus' responses either reformulate their questions into right questions or direct them to topics that are the proper vehicles for seeking and finding life. Most often, therefore, Jesus does not simply give a "right answer." Rather, Jesus presents "things to think about," things to "seek" understanding about. Thus, in *Gos. Thom.* Jesus is not actually "the teacher" of the disciples. They must use the questions and statements Jesus speaks as vehicles for seeking, finding, and understanding both what is inside and outside themselves. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 13:4-5:

13 ⁴Thomas said to him, "Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like." ⁵Jesus said, "I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended."

Jesus is not the teacher of disciples. Rather, Jesus introduces questions and statements, and this creates a context in which disciples "teach themselves" by "finding what is inside and outside themselves" and by "bringing this into their understanding." In this context, Jesus not only tells the disciples "about things," but he tells them what to ask themselves. Thus *Gos. Thom.* 88:

88 ¹Jesus said, "The messengers and the prophets will come to you and give you what is yours. ²You, in turn, give them what you have, and say to yourselves, 'When will they come and take what is theirs?'"

In a context where Jesus tells the disciples what they must do, he tells them what "to say to themselves." In other words, one of the major goals of the sayings of Jesus in *Gos. Thom.* is to teach the reader a form of internal dialogue in which to engage. They are to use the questions and sayings of Jesus as a "living" voice that speaks to them and asks them questions. This will lead them into an activity of seeking that holds the promise of finding life. In contrast to the Gospel of John, simply "believing" what one has seen and heard will not bring life. Rather, what one has seen and heard must become a living voice that engages one in seeking and finding life. The disciples must learn both what kinds of questions to ask themselves and what kinds of responses they must give to the questions they ask themselves. The responses they give themselves must not be direct. Rather, they must be the kinds of responses that hold the potential for changing the initial questions they ask.

One of the techniques that facilitates this process, finally, is to ask if Jesus has said something about a particular topic. It is important in the process of the internal dialogue to ask oneself what statement Jesus may have made that responds to the question one is asking. *Gos. Thom.* 111:3 exhibits this dimension in exemplary manner:

111 ³Does not Jesus say, "Whoever has found oneself, of that person the world is not worthy"?

Disciples must acquire the habit of asking themselves, "Doesn't Jesus say something about this particular topic?" In other words, what they must find and bring forth is not simply something within them but something outside them. Through an oral process of questions and answers "outside" them, they learn an oral process of internal questioning and answering that brings forth both what is inside and what is outside them.

Internally, then, the *Gos. Thom.* has the nature of a manual for discussion, dialogue, and reflection. It is not a manual for debating a hostile public of any kind, like the canonical gospels. There is no "public" it envisions debating. Rather, it envisions "disciples" who will call forth questions and responses attributed to Jesus and use them in a context of "public" discussion and dialogue that nurtures "internal" discussion, dialogue, and reflection. This, then, can be a process of seeking and finding life.

Questions in the Gospel of Thomas

What kind of socio-rhetorical approach can enact these insights about the inner texture of the Gos. Thom. in the form of a full-fledged socio-rhetorical program of analysis and interpretation? At this point, the *Progymnasmata* of Aelius Theon of Alexandria and Hermogenes of Tarsus give remarkable assistance (Butts 1987; Hock and O'Neil 1986; Robbins 1993b). Analysis of these rhetorical treatises brings into prominence the interaction among questions, if-(then) statements, when-(then) statements, rationales, negatives, commands, authoritative testimony, and narrative story in traditions attributed to authoritative individuals in Late Antiquity. Questions arise in contexts of possibilities (if) and probabilities (when). Possibilities and probabilities need reasons (rationales, premises, presuppositions) to support them, and these reasons need to be clarified in contexts where people explore what does and does not seem to be the case and what a person should and should not do. Thus, negatives as well as positives, including negative and positive commands, are necessary to clarify what should and should not be thought and done. In the context of questions and responses that contain reasons, clarifications, and commands, people seek support in authoritative testimony both in the present and the past, and this invites stories both from the present and the past.

Rather than attempt to give a glimpse of analysis of each of the phenomena in the *Gos. Thom.* named above, it has seemed better to focus on one phenomenon only " questions. A focus on questions alone can exhibit important dimensions of the gospel tradition, as a recent paper by Jerome H. Neyrey that merges social-scientific and rhetorical insights has shown (Neyrey forthcoming). The purpose in this present essay is to begin a socio-rhetorical analysis of gospel tradition that includes the *Gos. Thom.* Analysis of questions is only an initial step, but it is a step into one of the prominent rhetorical features of the gospel tradition. Rhetorical treatises from Late Antiquity show us that questions are an important phenomenon in contexts where sayings and actions of authoritative individuals transmit specific cultural values, attitudes, and dispositions. When questions are present, they may take the form of (1) a rhetorical question that simply advances the assertions of the speaker; (2) a simple question that only requires a "yes" or "no," (3) an inquiry that seeks specific information, or (4) a question that calls for an explanation, a reason "why" (cf. Hock and O'Neil 1986: 85-87). The *Gos. Thom.* contains thirty simple or compound questions in twenty sayings (see Appendix 1). Jesus asks sixteen of the questions, disciples ask twelve questions, and Mary and Salome each ask one question. The nature of these questions and the responses to them are important indicators of the "culture" they transmit. Comparing the questions in the *Gos. Thom.* with the questions in the canonical Gospels is an important beginning point for identifying the "resources"² that played a role in the "cultural configuration" that was enacted in the environments where Gospels were written and portions of them were performed either "by memory" or "by reading aloud" in various contexts in early Christianity.

Five of the rhetorical questions in *Gos. Thom.* are close variants of Q tradition (for all the questions and their parallels, see Appendix 1):

²It is important to change one's vocabulary from "sources" to "resources" when one is discussing orally transmitted tradition. I am grateful to J. D. H. Amador and James D. Hester for this insight.

78 ¹ Jesus said, "Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? ² And to see a person dressed in soft clothing, [like your] rulers and your powerful ones?"

//**Luke 7** ²⁴ When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶ What then did you go out to see? A prophet?"

//**Matt 11** ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

89 ¹ Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? ² Do you not understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"

//**Luke 11** ³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"

//**Matt 23** ²⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

Two rhetorical questions have a close relation to a statement that appears in a story that Luke has in a Q context:

72 ² He [Jesus] said to the person, "Sir, who made me a divider?" ³ He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"

//**Luke 12** ¹⁴ But he said to him [person in crowd], "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

Two rhetorical questions are related to Johannine topics:

104 ² Jesus said, "What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone?"

//**John 8** ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

18 ² Jesus said, "Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are seeking after the end?"

//**John 1** ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

Another rhetorical question concerns a fully Thomasine topic:

111 ¹ Jesus said, ... ² ... Does not Jesus say, "Whoever has found oneself, of that person the world is not worthy?"

Rhetorical questions in *Gos. Thom.*, then, display a spectrum from Q tradition through Lukan and Johannine tradition to a fully Thomasine topic of interest. With this spectrum, one gets a glimpse into the making of Thomasine tradition. There is a close verbal relation only to material in a context of Matthew/Luke overlap. The relation to Johannine tradition is occasionally phrasal, but it is usually only topical and never close to the same wording for an entire sentence or two.

What, then, about questions that call for a yes or no answer? All three questions of this type in *Gos. Thom.* feature fully canonical topics (see Appendix 1 for the parallels):

Do you want us to fast? (6:1; cf. Mark 2:18 par.)

Shall we give alms? (6:1; cf. Matt 6:2)

Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies? (22:3; cf. John 3:4)

These questions show that some Thomas tradition has a topical relation to common synoptic tradition (Matt/Mark/Luke). Once again, however, it shows a topical relation to Johannine tradition. None of the questions calling for a yes or no answer, however, represents a perpetuation of close but variant tradition. The only relation of these questions to canonical tradition is topical.

What, then, about questions asking for specific information? Six questions asking for information deal directly with topics in synoptic tradition:

How shall we pray? (6:1; cf. Luke 11:1)

When will the kingdom come? (113:1; cf. Luke 17:20)

When will you appear to us, and when shall we see you? (37:1; cf. Matt 24:3)

In this instance the questions have some noticeable relation to questions in synoptic tradition. In other words, the relationship is on the level of interrogative phrasing, and not simply on the topical level. But two other questions related to synoptic tradition are simply topical, rather than approximating questions disciples ask in the synoptic gospels:

What diet shall we observe? (6:1; cf. Mark 7:19)

Is circumcision useful or not? (53:1; cf. Luke 2:21)

In addition, there are questions asking for specific information that are closely related to Johannine tradition:

Where have you come from? (50:1; cf. John 6:42; 7:28; 19:9)

Who are you to say these things to us? (43:1; cf. John 8:25)

Who are you, sir? (61:2; cf. John 20:14)

These questions do not simply have a topical relation to tradition in the Gospel of John. Rather, someone in John asks a question similar to the question in the *Gos. Thom.* There are, however, a series of questions in *Gos. Thom.* that have only a topical relation to Johannine tradition. And, in many of these instances, there is a fully Thomasine formulation of the topic:

When you are in the light, what will you do? (11:1; cf. John 12:35)
Who will be our leader? (12:1; cf. John 6:68; 16:28)
What is the evidence of your Father in you? (50:3; cf. John 15:15-16)

One of the questions is a Thomasine formulation of both synoptic and Johannine tradition (see Davies: 60):

When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come? (51:1;
cf. Luke 17:20)

Then there are questions with fully Thomasine content:

But when you become two, what will you do? (11:1)
What did Jesus say to you? (13:7)
What are your disciples like? (21:1)
When will they come and take what is theirs? (88:2)

Questions asking for specific information, then, have a topical relation to all of the canonical gospels. But here one notices a special phenomenon: fifty percent of the questions asking for specific information (eight) are fully Thomasine in formulation and orientation. One of the characteristics of Thomas tradition, then, is that it has generated a substantive number of questions asking for specific information in a manner that is not featured in the canonical gospels.

Questions in the Gospel of Thomas and the Q Tradition

The section above shows that five rhetorical questions in three units of the *Gos. Thom.* have a close verbal relation to material in a Q context, while the relation of other questions is further removed from verbal replication. If one changes the investigation to analysis of Q tradition, analyzes all the questions in Q, and examines the relation of this Q material to the *Gos. Thom.*, there is a remarkable result. There are twenty-two units in the context of Q tradition that contain questions. In this material, the disciples of Jesus never ask a question. Rather, Jesus himself asks questions either to disciples or to crowds; and, in addition, four units feature John the Baptist, the Baptist's disciples, a rich man, God, and a nobleman each asking one question (see Appendix 2). The questions Jesus asks in the context of Q tradition are rhetorical, rather than inquiries for information. A rhetorical question, as we recall, is simply a way of making an assertion. Thus, a rhetorical question may be stated in a declarative as well as interrogative form. Among Matthew, Luke, and *Gos. Thom.*, then, one or two may have a performance of the tradition in an interrogative form, or one or two may have a performance in a declarative form.

The remarkable result is that the *Gos. Thom.* contains some or most of the content of twelve of the eighteen Q-context units that have questions in them. In other words, sixty-six percent of Q-context tradition containing questions Jesus asks either disciples or crowds is present in full or partial form in the *Gos. Thom.* (for the full text of all the parallels, see Appendix 2).

The amount of content of the Q-context tradition present in the *Gos. Thom.* varies from one small item to the entire thought. This is one of the characteristics of oral transmission of

tradition. Five of the eight units of Q-context tradition in which Jesus directs questions to the disciples show this spectrum of relationship:

- Q6:32-35 What credit is that to you...? (*Gos. Thom.* 95)
- Q6:39 What happens if a blind man leads a blind man...? (*Gos. Thom.* 34)
- Q6:41-42 Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye...? (*Gos. Thom.* 26)
- Q12:23-29 Why do you worry...? (*Gos. Thom.* 36)
- Q12:51 Do you think I bring peace...? (*Gos. Thom.* 16)

Only three of the eight units featuring questions by Jesus to the disciples in Q-context units are not perpetuated in *Gos. Thom.*:

- Q6:46 Why do you call me "Lord, Lord"...?
- Q11:11-12 Will you give a snake, scorpion, or stone...?
- Q12:6 Are not sparrows sold for a half-penny...?

In addition to the five units where Jesus questions disciples, seven of the ten units of Q-context tradition that direct questions to crowds are perpetuated in full or partial form in the *Gos. Thom.*:

- Q7:24-26 What did you go out to see...? (*Gos. Thom.* 78)
- Q11:21-22 How can one enter a strong man's house...? (*Gos. Thom.* 11:21)
- Q11:39-40 Did not the one who made the inside make the outside...? (*Gos. Thom.* 89)
- Q/Luke 12:14 Who made me a divider...? (*Gos. Thom.* 72)
- Q12:56-57 Why do you not know how to interpret the sky...? (*Gos. Thom.* 91)
- Q13:18//Mark 4:30 What is the kingdom of heaven like...? (*Gos. Thom.* 20)
- QLuke 15:4 Does he not leave the ninety-nine sheep...? (*Gos. Thom.* 107)

Only three of the ten units are not perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.*:

- Q7:24-26 To what will I compare this generation?
- Q11:18 If Satan is divided against himself...?
- Q14:34 If salt has lost its taste...?

The amount of the question-material in Q-context that is perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.* is remarkable. The manner in which it is perpetuated is also remarkable. Sometimes only one small item is present in the *Gos. Thom.* performance of the tradition; sometimes virtually the entire content is present. This is exactly the relationship a person should expect if the mode of transmission in the *Gos. Thom.* is oral.

Questions in the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of John

The relation of questions in the Gospel of John to tradition in *Gos. Thom.* is very different from the relation of questions in Q tradition to *Gos. Thom.* One will not expect a similar percentage of perpetuation of tradition, since the Gospel of John is a much longer account than the Q material. But one might expect one or two units with a sustained clausal

relationship. No such tradition exists in *Gos. Thom.* To see all the questions Jesus asks disciples and Jews, and the questions disciples and Jews ask Jesus, in the Gospel of John, see Appendix 3. Some units in the *Gos. Thom.* contain phrases related to statements in the Gospel of John. Only a few of the questions are perpetuated in the *Gos. Thom.*, but most that are perpetuated are important topics in both the *Gos. Thom.* and the Gospel of John. Two minor similarities occur in the following questions:

John 8⁴⁶ Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

//*Gos. Thom.* **104**² Jesus said, "What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone?"

John 6⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go?" //*Gos. Thom.* **12**¹ The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you will leave us. Who is going to be our leader?"

In each instance, there is a similarity close enough to detect some kind of relationship in the tradition. In John 8:46 Jesus is responding to Jews rather than his disciples, as in *Gos. Thom.* 104:2, and in John 6:68 Peter asks the questions rather than this disciples. But these variations would not be unusual even if the relation were scribal.

When we look further into the questions in John, a phenomenon arises that is challenging to interpret but noticeable. In three instances at least where there is a relationship between questions Jesus asks in John and *Gos. Thom.*, Jesus' response in *Gos. Thom.* contains Q-context material. One instance concerns who Jesus is and occurs with John 8:25-26:

John 8²⁵ They [the Jews] said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "What I have told you from the beginning."²⁶ I have much to say about you and much to condemn...."

In *Gos. Thom.* 43:1, Jesus' disciples rather than the Jews ask the question of Jesus. Jesus' response includes a variant version of Q-context material:

Gos. Thom. **43**¹ His disciples said to him, "Who are you to say these things to us?"

²"You do not understand who I am from what I say to you. ³Rather, you have become like the Jews, for they love the tree but hate its fruit, or they love the fruit but hate the tree."

///**Luke 6**⁴³ For no healthy tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a rotten tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit.

///**Matt 12**³³ Either think that the tree is healthy, and its fruit good; or suppose that the tree is rotten and its fruit bad; for by its fruit the tree is known. (cf. Matt 7:16-20)

The Q-context tradition shows variation both within itself and between itself and *Gos. Thom.* There are various passages in John that refer to fruit (4:36; 12:24; 15:2, 4, 5, 8, 16) but none to the tree. In *Gos. Thom.*, Jesus' response concerning who he is contains content that exhibits a relation to Q-context tradition.

Another instance concerns not who Jesus is, but where he is going. The Gospel of

John has three passages in which questions about where Jesus is going are either on Jesus' lips or on the lips of one of his disciples:

John 13 ³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." ³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now?..."

John 14 ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

John 16 ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"

John 16 ¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'?"

The *Gos. Thom.* has a variation of this topic which speaks either of how to find Jesus when he is no longer here or how to find the place where he is (now) (cf. Koester 1987: 103):

Gos. Thom. **38** ¹ Jesus said, "Often you have desired to hear these sayings that I am speaking to you, and you have no one else from whom to hear them. ²There will be days when you will seek me and you will not find me."

///**Luke 10** ²³ Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see! ²⁴ For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.

///**Matt 13** ¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

The *Gos. Thom.* contains a modulation of Q-context tradition into future tense, raising the issue of where Jesus will go. The Gospel of John moves beyond Thomas tradition specifically to the topic of "where Jesus will go," and this becomes a repetitive topic in Johannine discourse.

The *Gos. Thom.* contains a variant of this topic which speaks of seeking Jesus where he is, rather than where he will go:

Gos. Thom. **24** ¹ His disciples said, "Show us the place where you are, for we must seek it." ²He said to them, "Whoever has ears should hear. ³There is light within a person of light, and it shines on the whole world. If it does not shine, it is dark."

///**Luke 11** ³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵ Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. ³⁶ If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.

///**Matt 6** ²² The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; ²³ but if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness.

The remarkable thing is that whether the issue is finding Jesus when he is no longer here or seeking the place where Jesus now is, Thomas tradition has Jesus respond in words that are a close variant of Q-context tradition. With this topic, it appears as though the Thomas tradition stands in an intermediate position between the Q tradition and the Gospel of John. The Gos. Thom. has advanced the issue of "seek and you will find" in Q tradition both to "there will be a time when you will seek me and not find me" and "it is necessary to seek the place where I am." The Gospel of John has advanced these two topics to a repetitive theme that concerns "where Jesus is going."

Another similar relation among Gos. Thom., Q-context tradition, and John exists with the topic of where Jesus is from and who chose the twelve. The Gospel of John treats these as two separate topics:

John 7²⁸ Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from?"

John 6⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve?"

John 13¹⁸ I know whom I have chosen....

John 15¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you....¹⁹ ... I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

The *Gos. Thom.* merges these topics together in a passage that presents one of the most fully developed statements of Thomasine theology (De Conick: 64-96):

Gos. Thom. **50**¹ Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.'² If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.'³ If they say to you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"

When the issue becomes the evidence of the Father in the disciples and the answer includes "rest," the well known Q-context passage in its Matthean version has a fascinating relation to the Thomasine tradition:

Matt 11²⁷ All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (cf. Luke 10:21-22)

In this Q-context tradition, the result of the Son's revelation of the Father to the disciple is the presence of rest in the disciple. In Gos. Thom., the phenomenon of rest in the disciple is evidence of the Father in him or her. In this instance, it appears as though the Johannine and Thomasine traditions have developed independently from one another, rather than in any relation of dependence. In contrast to the Gos. Thom., the Gospel of John makes

"becoming a child of light" directly dependent upon "belief":

John 12³⁵ As you have the light, believe in the light so that you become sons of the light.

The *Gos. Thom.* formulates having the light in terms of seeking and finding it, rather than believing in it. The *Gos. Thom.* simply followed the line of reasoning laid out in "seek and you will find" from Q tradition, while Gospel of John introduced the concept of finding it by believing in it.

The concept of belief in the Gospel of John takes one to the issue of confirmation of the truth of Jesus' sayings in written tradition:

5⁴⁷ But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?

In John, belief rather than seeking is the key to finding the light, and what is written testifies to the truth that Jesus is the light. Again, the Gospel of John exhibits a mode of scribalizing the gospel tradition to confirm it, a step that is not present either in the early Q-context tradition or in the *Gos. Thom.* Neither in Q material nor in the *Gos. Thom.* does Jesus ask, "Do you believe what I say?" In contrast, this is a common phenomenon in the Gospel of John. In John, Jesus insists that written tradition verifies the truth of what he says. In contrast, the *Gos. Thom.* emphasizes that the words of Jesus are a vehicle for eternal life "on their own terms," namely, as words that invite additional questions, dialogue, and reflection, rather than words that are verified by written tradition.

Along with Jesus' emphasis in the Gospel of John that what is written confirms what he says, Jesus not resist the title teacher like he does in the *Gos. Thom.* Rather, in John Jesus claims to be both teacher and Lord:

13¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am.'

In John the issue of whether or not Jesus teaches the truth becomes an issue of whether written tradition confirms that he is God's Son:

10³⁴ Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?"³⁵ If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods' and the scripture cannot be annulled,³⁶ can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"

In the Gospel of John, rhetorical questions by Jesus are embedded in a narrative context that portrays Jesus as God's Son -- Teacher of truth and Lord to be worshipped. Thus, a repetitive theme in John is the question by Jesus, "Do you believe what I say?" The Gospel of John exhibits a step in the tradition where Jesus' rhetorical questions have become a vehicle for believing that Jesus speaks the truth about himself and the Father and for worshipping Jesus as "the way, the truth, and the life." The *Gos. Thom.* does not take this step. Rather, Jesus' sayings are, in and of themselves, the vehicle for asking more questions and reflecting

for the purpose of seeking, finding, being disturbed, marvelling, and reigning (*Gos. Thom.* 2). The *Gos. Thom.* does not enter the domain or argument about written tradition that confirms the truth of what Jesus says. Rather, it has developed its insights into who Jesus is out of Q-context tradition that concerns seeking and finding.

In sum, the questions in *Gos. Thom.* show substantive oral overlap with Q-context tradition, and they contain phrases and topics that overlap with Johannine tradition. The relationship between *Gos. Thom.* and John covers a spectrum from a fragment of a thought to the same or very similar idea. There is never, however, sustained overlap like one sees between the *Gos. Thom.* and Q-context tradition. The *Gos. Thom.* does not exhibit a process of "selecting" topics out of the Gospel of John. Rather, the relation of John to *Gos. Thom.* is more like the relation of *Gos. Thom.* to Q-context tradition. The Gospel of John does not perform phrases and clauses of *Gos. Thom.* as closely as *Gos. Thom.* performs phrases and clauses of Q-context tradition. But when topics in Johannine questions show a relation to Thomas material, the Thomas material often contains content related to Q-context tradition. It appears that the Gospel of John uses Q-tradition through an intermediate tradition like that found in the *Gos. Thom.* In *Gos. Thom.*, the emphasis on the words of Jesus is perpetuated and developed without being modulated into a mode where they are verified by "written tradition." In contrast, the Gospel of John, like the fully developed Q Sayings Gospel and the synoptic gospels, scribalizes the gospel tradition. Only an exhibition of the expansion of if-statements, when-statements, rationales, negatives, and narrative story can show the manner in which *Gos. Thom.* embellished early stages of Q, and possibly early stages of Johannine tradition, in an oral context that produced a mode of elaboration distinctly different from the canonical gospels. These are topics for other investigations.

Conclusion

In this essay it has been possible to present only an initial socio-rhetorical analysis of questions in the *Gos. Thom.* This analysis led to an investigation of all the questions in Q-context tradition and of some questions in the Gospel of John. The data analyzed in this essay suggests that the *Gos. Thom.* does not recite tradition in a scribal manner from first century written sources. Rather, the *Gos. Thom.* reveals a status of "orally transmitted resources." Q tradition and Matthew and Luke in the context of Q tradition function as special historical, social, cultural, and ideological resources for the traditions in the *Gos. Thom.* The closest relation is either with Matthew/Luke overlap tradition or Matthean or Lukan tradition in a context of overlap tradition. There is also some relation to Markan tradition. The relation to Johannine tradition is very complex, with a possibility that Thomasine tradition is an intermediate resource between Q tradition and the Gospel of John.

The challenge for socio-rhetorical analysis will be to describe the relation of other rhetorical phenomena like if-statements, when-statements, rationales, negatives, commands, ancient testimony, and narrative story to canonical tradition. One of the noticeable characteristics of the canonical gospels is that each, in its own way, relates these phenomena to "that which is written." The *Gos. Thom.* does not. The *Gos. Thom.* maintains a focus on speech and hearing rather than writing and written testimony. Another noticeable characteristic of the canonical gospels, which must be the topic of other investigations, is the manner in which each, in its own way, engages in inductive/deductive elaboration of the sayings tradition. The *Gos. Thom.* does not. Rather, it appears that questions introduce topics that give rise to

other topics until a new configuration of topics invites either new questions or a reformulation of the initial questions. Thus, in *Gos. Thom.* the process of asking questions does not lead to definitive answers but to different questions.

A significant number of the Thomasine questions that are non-synoptic questions have a phrasal or topical relation to the Gospel of John. In contrast to Johannine tradition, Thomas tradition exhibits an environment in first century Christianity where followers of Jesus continued to generate questions through a process of oral transmission, rather than turning toward a process of "scribalizing" the tradition that focused on ancient written testimony. The Gospel of John refers to the disciples' memory of what is written (John 2:17), engages Jews over the meaning of what is written (e.g., John 5:39, 46-47), emphasizes how many aspects of Jesus' death fulfill what is written (John 19:24, 28, 36-37), and refers to many other signs performed by Jesus that "are not written in this book" (John 20:30). The *Gos. Thom.*, in contrast, maintains a persistent focus on that which was spoken by Jesus, that which disciples spoke to Jesus and to one another, and that which disciples are supposed to speak to others and to themselves. This focus has produced additional questions rather than "written citations" that attest to the truth of answers given to questions. Investigation of the relation among if-statements, when-statements, rationales, commands, citation of ancient testimony, and narrative story can shed yet further light on the manner in which the *Gos. Thom.* perpetuates in an oral manner portions of first century tradition that were "scribalized" in the Q Sayings Gospel, Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.

Appendix 1: Questions in the Gospel of Thomas

6¹ His disciples asked him and said to him, "Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?"

//**Mark 2**¹⁸ Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" (cf. Matt 9:14//Luke 5:33; Matt 6:16-18)

//**Luke 11**¹ ... one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." (cf. Matt 6:5-9)

//**Matt 6**² Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you,...³ But when you give alms, donot let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

//**Mark 7**¹⁹ He declared all foods clean.

11¹ Jesus said,...³ "When you are in the light, what will you do? ⁴ On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?"

//**John 12**³⁵ Walk as you have the light, that darkness may not overcome you. ... As you have the light, believe in the light so that you become sons of the light.

12¹ The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you will leave us. Who will be our leader?"

//**John 16**⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"

//**John 16**²⁸ I have come out from the Father and I have come into the world. I am again leaving the world and return to the Father.

//**John 6**⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life;⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

13 ⁷ When Thomas came back to his friends, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?"
(no canonical gospel)

18 ² Jesus said, "Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are seeking after the end?"
//**John 1** ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

21 ¹ Mary said to Jesus, "What are your disciples like?" **(no canonical gospel)**

22 ³ They said to him, "Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies?"
//**John 3** ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

37 ¹ His disciples said, "When will you appear to us, and when shall we see you?"
//**Matt 24** ³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when this will be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (cf. Mark 13:4; Luke 21:7)
//**John 16** ¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me?'"

43 ¹ His disciples said to him, "Who are you to say these things to us?"
//**John 8** ²⁵ They [the Jews] said to him, "Who are you?"

50 ¹ Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where have you come from?' say to them, 'We have come from the light, from the place where the light came into being by itself, established [itself], and appeared in their image.' ² If they say to you, 'Is it you?' say, 'We are its children, and we are the chosen of the living Father.' ³ If they say to you, 'What is the evidence of your Father in you?' say to them, 'It is motion and rest.'"

//**John 1** ⁹ The true light that enlightens every human being was coming into the world.
//**John 12** ³⁵ As you have the light, believe in the light so that you become sons of the light.
//**John 6** ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you,..."

//**John 13** ¹⁸ I know whom I have chosen....

//**John 15** ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.... ¹⁹ ... I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

//**Matt 11** ²⁷ All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (cf. Luke 10:21-22)

51 ¹ His disciples said to him, "When will the rest for the dead take place, and when will the new world come?" **(no canonical gospel)**

53 ¹ His disciples said to him, "Is circumcision useful or not?" **(no canonical gospel)**

61 ² Salome said, "Who are you, sir?"

//**John 20** ¹⁴ Saying this, she [Mary] turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

72 ² He [Jesus] said to the person, "Sir, who made me a divider?" ³ He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"

//**Luke 12** ¹⁴ But he said to him [person in crowd], "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

78 ¹ Jesus said, "Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? ² And to see a person dressed in soft clothing, [like your] rulers and your leaders?"

//**Luke 7** ²⁴ When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶ What then did you go out to see? A prophet?"

//**Matt 11** ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

88 ¹ Jesus said, "The messengers and the prophets will come to you and give you what is yours. ² You, in turn, give them what you have, and say to yourselves, 'When will they come and take what is theirs?'" **(no canonical gospel)**

89 ¹ Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? ² Do you not understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"

//**Luke 11** ³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"

//**Matt 23** ²⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

104 ² Jesus said, "What sin have I committed, or how have I been undone?"

//**John 8** ⁴⁶ [Jesus said to the Jews,] "Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?"

111 ¹ Jesus said, ... ² ... Does not Jesus say, "Whoever has found oneself, of that person the world is not worthy?" **(no canonical gospel)**

113 ¹ His disciples said to him, "When will the kingdom come?"

//**Luke 17** ²⁰ Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom was coming, he answered them,...

//**Luke 19** ¹¹ As they [the crowd] heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

Appendix 2: Questions in Q, or Matthew or Luke in Q Context

Questions Jesus asks Disciples

Luke 6 ³² If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.

//**Matt 5** ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

///*Gos. Thom.* **95** ¹[Jesus said], "If you have money, do not lend it at interest. ²Rather, give [it] to someone from whom you will not get it back."

Luke 6 ³⁹ He also told them a parable: Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?

//**Matt 15** ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.

///*Gos. Thom.* **34** Jesus said, "If a blind person leads a blind person, both of them will fall into a hole."

Luke 6 ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴² Or how can you say to your brother, "Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye," when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

//**Matt 7** ³ Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," while the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

///*Gos. Thom.* **26** ¹Jesus said, "You see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but you do not see the beam that is in your own eye. ²When you take the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Luke 6 ⁴⁶ Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I tell you?

//**Matt 7** ²¹ Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" ²³ Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers."

(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 11 ¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?

//**Matt 7** ⁹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? ¹⁰ Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake?

(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 12 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?

//**Matt 10** 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?

(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 12 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.

24 Consider the ravens... Of how much more value are you than the birds!

25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?

26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?

28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith!

29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying.

//**Matt 6** 25 Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air... Are you not of more value than they?

27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?

28 And why do you worry about clothing?

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith?

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?"

///*Gos. Thom.* 36 Jesus said, "Do not worry, from morning to evening and from evening to morning, about what you will wear."

Luke 12 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth?

//**Matt 10** 34 Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.

///*Gos. Thom.* 16 1 Jesus said, "Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. 2 They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war. 3 For there will be five in a house: there will be three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father, 4 and they will stand alone."

Questions Jesus asks Crowds

Luke 7 24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. 26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet?"

//**Matt 11** 7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet."

///*Gos. Thom.* 78 1 Jesus said, "Why have you come out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind? 2 And to see a person dressed in soft clothing, [like your] rulers and your powerful ones? 3 They are dressed in soft clothing, and cannot understand truth."

Luke 7 31 To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?

//**Matt 11** 16 But to what will I compare this generation?

(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 11 ¹⁸ If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹ Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out?

//**Matt 12** ²⁶ If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out?

(no Gos. Thom.)

Luke 11 ²¹ When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. ²² But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder.

//**Matt 12** ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man?

///Gos. Thom. **35** ¹Jesus said, "One cannot enter the house of the strong and take it by force without tying the person's hands. ²Then one will loot the person's house."

Luke 11 ³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"

//**Matt 23** ²⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

///Gos. Thom. **89** ¹Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? ²Do you not understand that the one who made the inside is also the one who made the outside?"

Luke 12 ¹⁴ But he said to him [person in crowd], "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

///Gos. Thom. **72** ¹A [person said] to him, "Tell my brothers to divide my father's possession with me." ²He said to the person, "Sir, who made me a divider?" ³He turned to his disciples and said to them, "I am not a divider, am I?"

Luke 12 ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

⁵⁷ And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?

//**Matt 16** ³ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

///Gos. Thom. **91** ¹They said to him, "Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you." ²He said to them, "You examine the face of heaven and earth, but you have not come to know the one who is in your presence, and you do not know how to examine this moment."

Luke 13 ¹⁸ He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it?"

//**Matt 13** ³¹ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like..."

//**Mark 4** ³⁰ And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?"

///Gos. Thom. **20** ¹The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like."

Luke 14 ³⁴ Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?
//**Matt 5** ¹³ You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 15 ⁴ Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?
//**Matt 18** ¹² What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?
///*Gos. Thom.* **107** ¹ Jesus said, "The kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. ²One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and sought the one until he found it. ³After he had toiled, he said to the sheep, 'I love you more than the ninety-nine.'"

Questions other People ask

Luke 3 ⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
//**Matt 3** ⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 7 ¹⁸ The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹ and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ²⁰ When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'"
//**Matt 11** ² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"
(no *Gos. Thom.*)

Luke 12 ¹⁷ And he [rich man] thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" ²⁰ But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"
///*Gos. Thom.* **63** ¹ Jesus said, "There was a rich person who had a great deal of money. ²He said, 'I shall invest my money so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouses with produce, that I may lack nothing.' These were the things he was thinking in his heart, but that very night he died. ⁴Whoever has ears should hear."

Luke 19 ²³ [The nobleman said,] "Why then did you not put my money into the bank?"
//**Matt 25** ²⁶ But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest." (no *Gos. Thom.*)

Appendix 3: Questions Jesus asks Disciples and Jews, and Disciples and Jews ask Jesus in the Gospel of John

Questions Jesus asks Disciples

- 1** ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them [the two disciples] following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?"
- 4** ³⁴ Jesus said to them [the disciples], "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵ Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest?'"
- 6** ⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?" **6** ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?"
- 6** ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve?"
- 11** ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight?"
- 13** ¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am."
- 14** ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"
- 16** ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"
- 16** ¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me?'"
- 16** ³¹ Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe?"
- 18** ¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"
- 20** ²⁹ Jesus said to him [Thomas], "Have you believed because you have seen me?"
- 21** ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?"
- 21** ¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"
- 21** ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"
- 21** ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?"
- 21** ²² Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" ²³ So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

Questions Jesus asks Jews

- 5** ⁴⁴ How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God?
- 5** ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?
- 7** ¹⁹ Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?

7²³ If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath?

7²⁸ Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from?"

8²⁵ ... Jesus said to them, "Why do I speak to you at all?"

8⁴² Jesus said to them, "...⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word."

8⁴⁶ Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?

10³² Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?"

10³⁴ Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?³⁵ If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods' and the scripture cannot be annulled,³⁶ can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?"

18⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"

18⁷ Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"

18¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.²⁰ Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said."

18²³ Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

Questions Disciples ask Jesus

1³⁸ They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

4²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?"

6⁹ There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?

6⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go?"

9² His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 11⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"

12⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said,⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?"

13²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he [the beloved disciple] asked him, "Lord, who is it [who will betray you]?"

13³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward."³⁷ Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."³⁸ Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me?"

14⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

21¹² Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.

21²⁰ Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?"

21²¹ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

Questions Jews ask Jesus

2¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this [disrupting the temple]?"

2²⁰ The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?"

8⁵ [Scribes and Pharisees said,] "Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

8¹⁹ Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?"

8²⁵ They said to him, "Who are you?"

8³³ They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"

8⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

8⁵³ "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?"

8⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"

10²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

9⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?"

18²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?"

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