

The Gospel of Q: A Public Domain Translation

by Mark M. Mattison

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The text is based on the reconstruction of James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffman, and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas* (Peeters), 2000. *The Critical Edition* represents probably the most refined and detailed work on Q to date; it meticulously sorts through the “double tradition” of Matthew and Luke word-for-word, considering the respective editorial tendencies of both Gospels in carefully considering the probable wording of the original source shared between the two.

Q (for *quelle*, meaning “source”) is widely believed to have been written in Greek, probably in Galilee sometime between 50 and 70 C.E.

Since scholars believe Luke preserves the original chronology of Q more closely than Matthew, most of the verses retain the numbers used in Luke.

Gaps in the reconstructed text are denoted by square brackets. These represent unknown portions of the text that can't be reconstructed.

For a more colloquial translation along with some commentary, see my book *The Gospel of Q: Jesus' Prophetic Wisdom*, available from Amazon.com.

QLk 3:2 John [...] ³[...] the entire region around the Jordan [...]

⁷He told the crowds who went out to be baptized, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the fury to come? ⁸So bear fruit worthy of change! Don’t start to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our ancestor,’ because I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones.

⁹“Even now the axe lies at the root of the trees! So every tree that doesn’t bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹⁶“I baptize you in water, but one who’s greater than I will come, the thong of whose sandals I’m not worthy to loosen. He’ll baptize you in holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His pitchfork is in his hand to clean out his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his barn; but he’ll burn up the chaff with a fire that can’t be put out.”

²¹[...] Jesus [...] baptized [...] heaven opened ²²and [...] the Spirit [...] on him [...] Son [...]

4:1 Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert ²to be tested by the devil. He didn’t eat anything for forty days [...] he was hungry.

³And the devil told him, “If you’re God’s Son, tell these stones to turn into bread.”

⁴And Jesus replied, “It’s written, ‘A person shouldn’t live on bread alone.’”

⁹The devil led him to Jerusalem, set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said, “If you’re God’s Son, throw yourself down, ¹⁰because it’s written, ‘God will put God’s angels in charge of you,’ ¹¹and ‘On their hands they’ll bear you up, so that you don’t dash your foot against a stone.’”

¹²And in reply Jesus told him, “It’s been said, ‘Don’t test the Lord, your God.’”

⁵Then the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the empires of the world and their glory and told him, “I’ll give you all these, ⁷if you’ll bow to me.”

⁸And in reply Jesus told him, “It’s written: ‘Bow to the Lord your God, and serve God only.’”

¹³And the devil left him.

¹⁶[...] Nazareth [...]

6:20 He looked up at his disciples and said:

Blessed are you who are poor,
because yours is God’s reign.

²¹Blessed are you who are hungry,
because you’ll be full.

Blessed are you who mourn,
because you'll be comforted.

²²“Blessed are you when they criticize you, persecute you, and spread lies about you because of the Son of Humanity. ²³Rejoice and be glad, because your heavenly reward is great; for that's how they persecuted the prophets before you.

²⁷“Love your enemies, ²⁸and pray for those who persecute you. ³⁵You'll become children of your Father, who makes the sun rise on those who are evil and those who are good, and sends rain on those who are just and those who are unjust.

²⁹“When someone slaps you on the cheek, offer the other one too. When someone sues you for your shirt, give them your coat too. ^{QMt 5:41}When someone makes you go one mile, go an extra mile. ^{QLk 6:30}Give to everyone who asks you, and when someone borrows your things, don't ask for them back.

³¹“Treat people how you want them to treat you. ³²If you love those who love you, why should you be rewarded? Don't even toll collectors do that? ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, why should you be rewarded? Don't even gentiles do that? ³⁶Be merciful, just like your Father.

³⁷“Don't judge, and you won't be judged; ^{QMt 7:21}because you'll be judged the way that you judge. ^{QLk 6:38}And you'll be measured the way that you measure.

³⁹“Can someone who can't see guide another person who can't see? Won't they both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A disciple isn't greater than their teacher. It's enough for the disciple to become like their teacher.

⁴¹“Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that's in your own eye? ⁴²How can you tell your brother, ‘Let me get that speck out of your eye,’ when you don't see the beam that's in your own eye? You hypocrite! First get the beam out of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to get the speck out of your brother's eye.

⁴³“No good tree bears rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴Every tree is known by its own fruit. Are figs gathered from thorns, or grapes from thistles? ⁴⁵The person who's good brings good things out of their good treasure, and the person who's evil brings evil things out of evil treasure, because one's mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

⁴⁶“Why do you call me, ‘Master, Master,’ and don't do what I say? ⁴⁷Everyone who hears my words and acts on them ⁴⁸can be compared to someone building a house on bedrock. When the rain poured, and the floods came, and the winds blew and pounded that house, it didn't collapse, because it was founded on bedrock. ⁴⁹But everyone who hears my words and doesn't act on them is like someone who built a house on the sand. When the rain poured, and the floods

came, and the winds blew and pounded that house, it collapsed immediately. How great was its fall!”

7:1 And so when it happened that he had finished saying these things, he went to Capernaum. ³A centurion approached and begged him and said, “My boy is sick.”

And Jesus told him, “I’ll go heal him.”

⁶And the centurion replied, “Master, I’m not worthy for you to come under my roof. ⁷Just say the word, and my boy will be healed. ⁸I’m also in a chain of command, with soldiers under me. I tell one, ‘Go,’ and they go; I tell another, ‘Come,’ and they come; I tell my servant, ‘Do this,’ and they do it.”

⁹Jesus was amazed when he heard this. He told his followers, “I’m telling you the truth: I haven’t found such trust even in Israel.”

¹⁸When John heard all these things, he sent his disciples ¹⁹to ask him, “Are you the coming one, or should we look for someone else?”

²²And he replied to them, “Go and tell John what you’ve heard and seen. Those who:

are blind, regain their sight;
have challenges of mobility, walk;
have leprosy, are cured;
are deaf, hear;
are dead, are raised up;
are poor, have good news announced to them.

²³Blessed is the one who isn’t scandalized by me.”

²⁴And when they had left, he started to talk to the crowds about John. “What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fancy clothes? Look, those who wear fancy clothes live in palaces. ²⁶Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I’m telling you, and much more than a prophet, ²⁷because it’s written about him:

Look, I’m sending my messenger ahead of you,
who’ll prepare your path for you.

²⁸“I’m telling you that John is greater than anyone who’s been born, but whoever is least in God’s reign is still greater than he, ²⁹because John came to you [...] the toll collectors and [...] ³⁰but [...] him.

³¹“To what, then, can I compare this generation? What’s it like? ³²It’s like children sitting in the marketplaces calling to each other:

We played the flute for you,
but you didn't dance.
We mourned,
But you didn't weep.

³³“John didn't come eating or drinking, and you say, ‘He's demonized!’ ³⁴The Son of Humanity has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of toll collectors and outsiders!’ ³⁵But Wisdom is vindicated by her children.”

9:57 And someone told him, “I'll follow you wherever you go.”

⁵⁸And Jesus told him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Humanity has nowhere to rest his head.”

⁵⁹But someone else told him, “Master, let me go and bury my father first.”

⁶⁰But he told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

10:2 He told his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. So ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into the fields. ³Go! Look, I send you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴Don't carry a purse, bag, sandals, or staff. Don't greet anyone on the road. ⁵Whenever you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ ⁶If a peaceful person is there, let your blessing rest on them; but if not, take back your blessing. ⁷Stay in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, because the worker is worthy of their wages. Don't move around from house to house. ⁸If they welcome you in whatever town you enter, eat whatever is set before you. ⁹Heal those who are sick there and tell them, ‘God's reign is at hand!’ ¹⁰But if they don't welcome you in whatever town you enter, when you're leaving that town, ¹¹shake the dust from your feet. ¹²I'm telling you that on that day, it'll be better for Sodom than for that town!

¹³“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the great deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have changed a long time ago in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴But it will be better for Tyre and Sidon than for you in the judgment! ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, you don't think you'll be exalted to heaven, do you? You'll fall down to Hades!

¹⁶“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.”

²¹Then he said, “Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the wise and learned and revealing them to children. Yes, Father, this was what you wanted. ²²My Father has given me everything. No one knows who the son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the son, and the one to whom the son wants to reveal him.

²³“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴I'm telling you that many prophets and rulers wanted to see what you see, but didn't see it; and to hear what you hear, but didn't hear it.

11:2 “When you pray, say:

Father,
We honor your holy name.
Let your reign come.
³Give us our daily bread today.
⁴Forgive us our debts,
because we too forgive everyone who’s indebted to us.
Don’t put us in harm’s way.

⁹“I’m telling you, ask and you’ll receive. Look and you’ll find. Knock and it’ll be opened for you, ¹⁰because everyone who asks receives. The one who looks finds. To one who knocks it’ll be opened. ¹¹Which of you would give your child a stone if they ask for bread? ¹²Or who would give them a snake if they ask for fish? ¹³So if you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give good things to those who ask!”

¹⁴He was casting out a demon that couldn’t speak. And when the demon came out, the person who couldn’t speak started talking. And the crowds were amazed. ¹⁵But some said, “He casts out demons with the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons!”

¹⁷Knowing what they were thinking, he told them, “Every divided empire is devastated, and a divided house will fall. ¹⁸If the Enemy is divided, how will its empire endure? ¹⁹But if Beelzebul gives me power to cast out demons, who gives your people power to cast them out? So they prove you wrong. ²⁰But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then God’s reign has come to you!

²³“Whoever isn’t with me is against me, and whoever doesn’t gather with me, scatters. ²⁴When the impure spirit leaves someone, it journeys through arid places looking for rest, but doesn’t find it. Then it says, ‘I’ll return to the home I left’; ²⁵and when it comes back, it finds it swept and organized. ²⁶Then it goes out and brings seven other spirits that are even more evil, and they move in and live there. That person ends up even worse off than before.”

¹⁶Some demanded him to show a sign. ²⁹But he said, “This is an evil generation. It demands a sign, but no sign will be provided except the sign of Jonah! ³⁰As Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so the Son of Humanity will be a sign to this generation. ³¹The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon’s wisdom; and look, something greater than Solomon is here. ³²The people of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, because they changed in response to Jonah’s announcement, and look, something greater than Jonah is here.

³³“No one lights a lamp and hides it, but puts it on a lampstand, and it enlightens everyone in the house. ³⁴Your eye is the body’s lamp. If your eye is single, your whole body is full of light. If your eye is evil, your whole body is dark. ³⁵So if the light within you is dark, how dark it is!

⁴²“Woe to you, Pharisees! You tithe your mint, dill, and cumin, but you ignore justice, mercy, and trust. You should’ve done these without ignoring the others.

³⁹“Woe to you, Pharisees! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they’re full of greed and decadence. ⁴¹Clean the inside of the cup, and its outside will be clean too.

⁴³“Woe to you, Pharisees! You love the place of honor at banquets, the front seat in the synagogues, and accolades in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴Woe to you, because you’re like unmarked graves that people walk on without knowing it.

⁴⁶“And woe to you, lawyers! You load people with burdens that are hard to bear, but you yourselves won’t even lift a finger to help them.

⁵²“Woe to you, lawyers! You shut people out of God’s reign. You didn’t enter, and didn’t let those enter who are trying to do so.

⁴⁷“Woe to you, because you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. ⁴⁸You prove that you’re the descendants of your ancestors. ⁴⁹So Wisdom said, ‘I’ll send prophets and sages. Some of them they’ll kill and persecute.’ ⁵⁰So this generation will be guilty of the blood of all the prophets shed from the beginning of the world, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who died between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I’m telling you that this generation will be held responsible.

12:2 “Nothing is concealed that won’t be revealed, nor hidden that won’t be made known. ³Whatever I tell you in the dark, say in the light; and whatever you hear whispered in your ear, announce from the housetops.

⁴“Don’t be afraid of those who kill the body but can’t kill the soul. ⁵Instead, fear the one who can kill both the soul and the body in Gehenna.

⁶“Don’t five sparrows cost two pennies? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s permission. ⁷Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid, because you’re more valuable than many sparrows.

⁸“Everyone who publicly acknowledges me, the Son of Humanity will acknowledge in front of the angels. ⁹But whoever publicly denies me will be denied in front of the angels. ¹⁰Whoever speaks out against the Son of Humanity will be forgiven, but whoever speaks out against the holy Spirit won’t be forgiven. ¹¹When they bring you before the synagogues, don’t worry about how or what you should say, ¹²because the holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

³³“Don’t store treasures for yourselves here on earth, where moth and rust destroy and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store treasures for yourselves in

heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy and where robbers don't break in or steal. ³⁴Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.

²²“So I'm telling you not to worry about your life, about what you'll eat; or about your body, what you'll wear. ²³Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁴Think about how the ravens don't sow, reap, or gather into barns, yet God feeds them. Aren't you more valuable than the birds?

²⁵“Which of you can grow any taller by worrying? ²⁶And why worry about clothes? ²⁷Look at how the lilies grow. They don't work or spin, yet I'm telling you that even Solomon in all his glory wasn't dressed like one of these. ²⁸But if God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, won't God clothe you even more, you who have little trust? ²⁹So don't worry. Don't ask, ‘What are we going to eat?’ or ‘What are going to drink?’ or ‘What are we going to wear?’ ³⁰The gentiles look for all these things, but your Father knows that you need all of them. ³¹Instead, look for God's reign, and all these things will be given to you too.

³⁹“But know this: If the master of the house had known at what time the robber was coming, he wouldn't have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You too should be ready, because the Son of Humanity is coming when you don't expect it.

⁴²“Then who is the trustworthy and wise servant who was entrusted by their master to hand out rations to the household at the right time? ⁴³Blessed is that servant whose master finds them doing so when he comes. ⁴⁴I'm telling you the truth: he'll put them in charge of all that he owns. ⁴⁵But if that servant says in their heart, ‘My master is late,’ and starts to beat the other servants and to eat and drink with those who are addicted to alcohol, ⁴⁶the master of that servant will come when they don't expect it, at a time that they don't know, and will rip them to shreds and throw them out with those who are untrustworthy.

⁴⁹“I came to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵¹Do you think that I came to bring peace on earth? I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword! ⁵³Because I've come:

⁵³To pit son against father,
daughter against her mother,
daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴He told them, “When it's evening, you say, ‘There'll be good weather, because the sky is red.’ ⁵⁵In the morning, ‘There'll be wintry weather today, because the sky is red and threatening.’ ⁵⁶You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky. Why don't you know how to interpret the time?

⁵⁸“When you're going with your adversary, do your best to settle the case on the way there, or else your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the

judge to the officer, and the officer may throw you into prison. ⁵⁹I'm telling you that you won't get out of there until you've paid the very last penny!

13:18 "What is God's reign like, and to what should I compare it? ¹⁹It can be compared to a mustard seed which someone sowed in their garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches."

²⁰"And again: To what should I compare God's reign? ²¹It can be compared to yeast which a woman hid in fifty pounds of flour until it was all fermented.

²⁴"Enter through the narrow door, because many will try to enter, though only a few will succeed. ²⁵When the master of the house gets up and locks the door, you'll be standing outside and knocking on it, saying, 'Master, open up for us!'

"But he'll reply, 'I don't know you.'

²⁶"Then you'll start saying, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.'

²⁷"But he'll tell you, 'I don't know you. Get away from me, you criminals!'

²⁹"Many will come from east and west and dine ²⁸with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in God's reign, but you'll be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there'll be weeping and grinding of teeth. ³⁰Those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last.

³⁴"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I would've gathered your children together, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you wouldn't let me! ³⁵Look, your house is left abandoned. I'm telling you that you won't see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'

14:11 "Whoever exalts themselves will be humbled, and whoever humbles themselves will be exalted.

¹⁶"Someone planning a great dinner invited many guests. ¹⁷When dinner was ready, they sent their servant to tell the invited guests, 'Come, because it's ready now!'

¹⁸"One excused himself because of his farm. ¹⁹Another excused himself because of his business. ²¹The servant went back and told their master all this. Then the master of the house became angry and told the servant, ²³'Go out to the highways and urge people to come in so that my house may be filled.'

²⁶"Whoever doesn't hate father and mother can't be my disciple, and whoever doesn't hate son and daughter can't be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever doesn't carry their own cross and follow me can't be my disciple.

17:33 "Whoever tries to find their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

14:34 "Salt is good, but if it's lost its flavor, how can you get it back? ³⁵It's no good for the soil or the manure pile. It's thrown away.

16:13 “No one can follow two masters, because they’ll either hate one and love the other, or they’ll be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t serve both God and Mammon.

¹⁶“The Torah and the prophets were announced until John. Since then, God’s reign has been violated, and the violent plunder it. ¹⁷But it’s easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke to drop out of the Torah.

¹⁸“Everyone who divorces his wife and remarries is unfaithful to her, and whoever marries someone who’s divorced is unfaithful too.

17:1 “There’s no way that people won’t be tripped up, but woe to the one who causes it! ²It’d be better for them if a millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea, than for them to trip up one of these little ones.

15:4 “Which of you, if you had a hundred sheep and lost one of them, wouldn’t leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go after the one that got lost? ⁵When they find it, ⁷I’m telling you that they’ll rejoice over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn’t wander off.

⁸“Or what woman with ten silver coins, if she loses one, wouldn’t light a lamp, sweep the house, and look everywhere until she found it? ⁹When she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says, ‘Rejoice with me, because I’ve found the coin that I’d lost!’ ¹⁰In the same way, I’m telling you, the angels rejoice over one wrongdoer who changes.

17:3 “If your brother offends you, correct him. If he changes, forgive him. ⁴Even if he offends you seven times a day, then forgive him seven times.

⁶“If you had trust as big as a mustard seed, you could tell this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

²⁰When he was asked when God’s reign would come, he replied to them, “The coming of God’s reign can’t be observed. ²¹Nor will they say, ‘Look over here!’ or ‘Look over there!’ Because look, God’s reign is among you.

²³“If they tell you, ‘Look, he’s in the desert!’ don’t go out; or ‘Look, he’s inside,’ don’t follow, ²⁴because as the lightning flashes in the east and is seen in the west, so will the Son of Humanity be in his day. ³⁷Where there’s a corpse, there the vultures will gather.

²⁶“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the day of the Son of Humanity. ²⁷In those days they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and swept all of them away. ³⁰That’s what it will be like on the day the Son of Humanity is revealed.

³⁴“I’m telling you, there’ll be two men in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵There’ll be two women grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other will be left.

19:12 “A certain person went on a trip. ¹³He called ten of his servants, gave them ten minas, and told them, ‘Do business with this until I return.’

¹⁵“After a long time the master of those servants returned to settle accounts with them. ¹⁶The first one came and said, ‘Master, your mina has made ten more minas.’

¹⁷“He told him, ‘Well done, good servant! Since you’ve been trustworthy with a little, I’ll put you in charge of much.’

¹⁸“The second came and said, ‘Master, Your mina has made five minas.’

¹⁹“He told him, ‘Well done, good servant! Since you’ve been trustworthy with a little, I’ll put you in charge of much.’

²⁰“The other came and said, ‘Master, ²¹I know you’re a strict man, reaping where you didn’t sow and gathering where you didn’t scatter. I went out and hid your mina in the ground. Look, here’s what belongs to you!’

²²“He told him, ‘You evil servant! You knew that I reap what I didn’t sow and gather where I didn’t scatter? ²³ So why didn’t you invest my money with the bankers? Then when I returned, I would’ve gotten it back, with interest. ²⁴So take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas, ²⁶because everyone who has will be given more, but whoever doesn’t have will lose even what little they do have.’

22:28 “You who’ve followed me ³⁰will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”