



Decoding the Enigmatic Synoptic Problem: An In-Depth Academic Analysis of Pentecostal Hermeneutics Applied to the Genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a Pentecostal Hermeneutics approach to resolving the synoptic problem through the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. Employing a combination of textual analysis, comparative study, and the application of Pentecostal hermeneutics, the article unraveled the complexities and discrepancies found in these parallel passages. It explored the hypotheses put forth by various scholars, providing a nuanced understanding and trajectory of the synoptic enigma. By examining the structures, contents, and language of the genealogies, unique features and patterns were highlighted. A comparative study is conducted, shedding light on the theological and cultural implications of the differences and similarities between Matthew and Luke's genealogies. Additionally, the article delved into the application of Pentecostal hermeneutics, demonstrating how this interpretive framework enhances the understanding of the genealogical narratives. By employing these methodological approaches, the article decoded the synoptic enigma, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the compositional techniques, theological significance, and historical context underlying these passages. This study serves as a valuable resource for academia, providing insights into a longstanding enigma in New Testament studies and helping to answer the synoptic problem.

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INTRODUCTION

The genealogies of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 have long been a topic of interest and debate among biblical scholars. Not only do these two accounts differ in terms of their structure and content, but they have also posed a challenge to resolving the synoptic problem. The synoptic problem is a fascinating and longstanding question in biblical scholarship that seeks to explain the

similarities and differences between the synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.¹ These three Gospels share numerous common stories, parables, and teachings for scholars and practitioners to explore the potential sources and relationships between them.² The term "synoptic" is derived from the Greek words *syn* (meaning "together") and *optic* (meaning "to see"), heightening the shared perspective of these three Gospels.³ Most scholars today agree that there is a literary relationship between them, with Mark being recognized by most scholars as the earliest Gospel and serving as a source for Matthew and Luke. However, despite the shared material, each Gospel also contains unique content and arrangement, which raises questions about their sources and the reasons behind their differences.⁴ The synoptic problem revolves around two main issues: the order of the material and the use of sources: Regarding the order of the material, Mark is widely acknowledged as the Gospel that presents a chronological narrative of Jesus' life. Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, deviate from Mark's order in significant ways, suggesting that they either restructured the material purposefully or had access to alternate sources.⁵ In terms of sources, one theory proposed to explain the similarities between the synoptic Gospels is the "Two-source hypothesis." This hypothesis suggests that Matthew and Luke utilized both the Gospel of Mark and a hypothetical sayings source known as "Q" (derived from the German word "Quelle," meaning source) to construct their own narratives. This theory explains why Matthew and Luke share common material not found in Mark.

Another theory called the Two-gospel hypothesis or the Griesbach hypothesis proposes that the Gospel of Matthew was the foremost gospel, followed by the Gospel of Luke, and finally the Gospel of Mark.⁶ Activists of the Griesbach Hypothesis maintain that the similarities between Matthew and Luke are better explained by Matthean priority.⁷ While no single resolution has gained unanimous acceptance, the synoptic problem continues to fascinate scholars, informing their understanding of the composition and transmission of the gospels and shedding light on the historical Jesus and early Christian communities.

This article argues that one promising approach to exploring and potentially resolving the synoptic problem is through a Pentecostal hermeneutic of the genealogy of Jesus, which emphasizes the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in understanding the biblical text.⁸ Drawing upon this theological framework, scholars can glean new insights and perspectives on the genealogies of Jesus and their role in resolving the synoptic problem.

In examining Matthew's genealogy, it becomes apparent that this account is structured around three sections of fourteen generations each. This numerical pattern, in addition to the highlighting of key figures such as Abraham, David, and the Babylonian exile, suggests a theological purpose for Matthew's genealogy to emphasize Jesus' Jewish and Messianic identity and to connect him to the broader narrative of Israel's history.

Luke's genealogy, on the other hand, takes a different approach. While also tracing Jesus' lineage back to Adam, Luke does not follow a strict numerical pattern but includes different figures such as Adam's son Seth and Melchi. This suggests that Luke's genealogy is meant to emphasize Jesus' universal significance and his identity as the Savior of all people, not just the Jewish nation. By utilizing a Pentecostal hermeneutic, scholars can uncover deeper theological implications of both writers. Matthew's genealogy emphasizes Jesus' status as the new Davidic king and rightful heir to the throne of Israel, while Luke's genealogy emphasizes Jesus' role as the new Adam and the one who will

¹ Stanley E Porter and Bryan R Dyer, *The Synoptic Problem: Four Views* (Baker Academic, 2016).

² Godwin A Etukumana, "How Does One Interpret the Synoptic Gospels' Warning Passages While Affirming the Irrevocable Nature of Salvation?," *HTS Theological Studies/Theological Studies* 74, no. 3 (2018).

³ Robert H Stein, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation* (Baker Academic, 2001).

⁴ David C Sim, "The Synoptic Gospels," *The Expository Times* 119, no. 7 (2008): 313–19.

⁵ Robert H Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Baker Book House, 1988).

⁶ Johan Engelbrecht, "Challenging the Two-Source Hypothesis: How Successful Are the Commentaries?," *Neotestamentica* 30, no. 1 (1996): 89–101.

⁷ Stephen E Paynter, "How the Synoptic Gospels Were Written An Evangelical Introduction to The Synoptic Problem, and to Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism," 2015.

⁸ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, "A Pentecostal Reflection on Christianity and Extremism: Christianity and Book Burnings in the Late Antiquity," *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, July 3, 2023, 268–80, <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2023972>.

redeem all of humanity from sin and death. Through careful analysis and interpretation of the two passages in Matthew and Luke, a Pentecostal approach to the genealogies of Jesus Christ can shed new light on these complex texts and help to resolve the synoptic problem.⁹ Additionally, by recognizing the influence of the Holy Spirit in understanding scripture, the redemptive history of the genealogy of Jesus Christ and the typology and symbolisms of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the theological intricacies within the Gospels and uncover hidden truths and meanings as well as decode the synoptic enigma.¹⁰

The study seeks to develop a Pentecostal hermeneutic approach to analyzing the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:17 and Luke 3:23-38. Secondly, the study investigates the similarities and differences between the two genealogies and how they relate to the Synoptic problem. Thirdly, the study evaluates how a Pentecostal hermeneutic can offer insights into resolving the Synoptic problem. Lastly, the author seeks to provide recommendations on how the Pentecostal hermeneutic approach can be applied to other biblical texts and theological issues.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study involves a combination of textual analysis, comparative study, and hermeneutical exploration. The textual Analysis analyzes the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. This involves examining the structure, content, and language used in both passages, paying attention to discrepancies and similarities. The analysis includes linguistic factors, such as the use of different words, genealogical patterns, and any notable omissions or additions. This type of analysis helps in uncovering the intricacies of the texts under investigation.

The comparative study is crucial for understanding how Matthew and Luke's genealogies differ from each other. This involves comparing and contrasting the various elements and details presented in both passages. It may include comparing the order and arrangement of names, identifying any unique additions to the genealogy, and exploring the theological or cultural implications of these differences. A comparative study allows for a deeper understanding of how each author approached and highlighted different aspects of Jesus' lineage.

The hermeneutical exploration focuses on the application of Pentecostal hermeneutics to the genealogies of Jesus Christ. In this case, Pentecostal hermeneutics involves examining how Pentecostalism's theological framework sheds light on the understanding and interpretation of the genealogies.

By combining these three methodological approaches, the article can provide an in-depth analysis of the synoptic enigma, focusing on the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. This methodology allows for a comprehensive exploration of the textual, comparative, and hermeneutical dimensions of the topic, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in decoding the synoptic enigma.

Exploring the Synoptic Enigma: A Journey through Diverse Perspectives

The synoptic problem has intrigued biblical scholars for centuries, challenging the ability to unravel the intricate relationships between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.¹¹ This study embarks on a journey through the various positions proposed by various scholars in addressing this problem, shedding light on the diverse perspectives and debates that have shaped biblical scholarship to recommend an approach apt for resolution.¹²

⁹ Alonso L. Schokel, *A Manual of Hermeneutics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), <https://archive.org/details/manualofhermeneu0000alon>.

¹⁰ Martin Lee Roy, *Introduction to Pentecostal Hermeneutics* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

¹¹ Engelbrecht, "Challenging the Two-Source Hypothesis: How Successful Are the Commentaries?," Porter and Dyer, *The Synoptic Problem: Four Views*.

¹² Wolfgang Grünstäudl, "Luke's Doublets and the Synoptic Problem," *New Testament Studies* 68, no. 1 (2022): 13–25.

1. The Two-Source Hypothesis

The Two-Source Hypothesis is a proposed solution to the synoptic problem, which seeks to explain the relationship between the three gospels. According to this hypothesis, both Matthew and Luke relied on Mark's Gospel as a primary source, while also incorporating another hypothetical source known as Q.¹³ The Q is believed to contain sayings of Jesus that are not found in Mark but are shared by Matthew and Luke. In summary, the two-source hypothesis suggests that Mark's Gospel served as a foundational text, with both Matthew and Luke drawing from it, and that Q provided additional material consisting of Jesus' teachings.¹⁴ This hypothesis attempts to explain the similarities and differences in content, wording, and order among the synoptic Gospels.

2. The Farrer-Goulder Hypothesis

The Farrer-Goulder hypothesis is a proposed solution to the synoptic problem, which seeks to explain the relationship between the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). According to this hypothesis, Mark was the first written Gospel, and both Matthew and Luke independently used Mark as a source.¹⁵ In addition, the Farrer-Goulder hypothesis suggests that Luke incorporated material from Matthew into his Gospel, alongside his dependence on Mark. Unlike the Two-Source Hypothesis, which posits the existence of a hypothetical document called Q, the Farrer-Goulder Hypothesis does not propose the existence of Q.¹⁶ The Farrer-Goulder Hypothesis has gained some support among biblical scholars, who argue that it provides a simpler and more elegant solution to the synoptic relationships, without invoking an additional written source like Q. However, it remains a subject of ongoing debate and is not universally accepted.

3. The Proto-Gospel Hypothesis

The proto-gospel refers to a hypothetical common source that scholars believe was used by the authors of the synoptic gospels.¹⁷ According to this theory, the authors of the synoptic gospels used the proto-gospel as a reference to write their own accounts of Jesus' life and teachings. The proto-gospel is thought to have contained mainly the sayings of Jesus without much narrative context. However, there is no physical evidence of the existence of the proto-gospel, as no ancient manuscripts or fragments have been discovered. It is a hypothetical source, constructed based on the similarities and differences between the synoptic gospels. The proto-gospel hypothesis remains a prominent explanation for the synoptic problem.

4. The Two-Gospel Hypothesis /The Griesbach Hypothesis

The Griesbach Hypothesis, named after Johann Jakob Griesbach, proposes a different solution to the Synoptic Problem. According to this hypothesis, the Gospel of Matthew was the first gospel written, followed by the Gospel of Luke, and finally the Gospel of Mark.¹⁸ Unlike the Two-Source Hypothesis, the Griesbach Hypothesis suggests that Luke used both Matthew and Mark as sources. Advocates of the Griesbach Hypothesis argue that the similarities between Matthew and Luke can be better explained by Matthew's priority and Luke's use of both Matthew and Mark. They believe that Luke intentionally omitted certain materials found in Mark and rearranged the material from Matthew to fit his own literary and theological goals. However, the Griesbach Hypothesis faces some challenges. One of the main criticisms is the significant amount of unique material found in the Gospel of Mark that is absent in Matthew and Luke. Critics argue that if Mark was written after Matthew or Luke, it is difficult

¹³ Paynter, "How the Synoptic Gospels Were Written an Evangelical Introduction to The Synoptic Problem, and to Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism."

¹⁴ Engelbrecht, "Challenging the Two-Source Hypothesis: How Successful Are the Commentaries?"

¹⁵ Grünstäudl, "Luke's Doublets and the Synoptic Problem." 13-25.

¹⁶ Paynter, "How the Synoptic Gospels Were Written an Evangelical Introduction to The Synoptic Problem, and to Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism.;" Engelbrecht, "Challenging the Two-Source Hypothesis: How Successful Are the Commentaries?"

¹⁷ A. D. Baum, "The Semitic Background of the Gospels and the Proto-Gospel Hypothesis: Considerations in Connection to Guido Baltes," *Theologische Beiträge* 44, no. 6 (December 2013): 306–23.

¹⁸ Engelbrecht, "Challenging the Two-Source Hypothesis: How Successful Are the Commentaries?"

to explain why he would exclude such distinctive content. Overall, while the Griesbach Hypothesis offers an alternative perspective to the Synoptic Problem, it has garnered less support than the Two-Source Hypothesis and other theories. The debate surrounding the Synoptic Problem continues, and scholars engage in ongoing discussions to enhance understanding of the relationships between the Synoptic Gospels.

That notwithstanding, the undisputed tradition of the early church fathers from at least, Augustine until the eighteenth century is that Matthew's Gospel was the earliest.¹⁹ This can only be disputed on the grounds of so-called "internal evidence" trying to make sense of which Gospel would be more likely to have made changes from the others.

Current State of the Synoptic Problem Debate

The current state of the Synoptic Problem debate is characterized by ongoing discussion and scholarship without consensus on the best resolution. The major positions on the Synoptic Problem, including the Two-Source Hypothesis, the Farrer-Goulder Hypothesis, and the Proto-Gospel Hypothesis, continue to be debated, with proponents and detractors on each side offering new arguments and evidence. Recent developments in methodology and technology have aided the investigation of the Synoptic Problem, such as the use of computers to analyze the text and shared vocabulary across the Gospels. However, these developments have not yet yielded a clear resolution to the debate. Points of agreement include general agreement on the priority of Mark, as well as broad acceptance of the concept of literary dependence among the Synoptic Gospels. However, areas of continued debate include the specific sources utilized by each Gospel writer, the relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptic Gospels, and the role of redactional activity. The Synoptic Problem remains a complex and unresolved issue in biblical scholarship, with ongoing research and dialogue necessary to expand and refine understanding of the synoptic relationship.

The journey through the various positions of the Synoptic Problem makes it clear that this enigmatic puzzle remains a captivating mystery within biblical scholarship. Although numerous theories and perspectives have been proposed, an ultimate consensus has not yet emerged. Emphasizing the need for further research and dialogue. This study recognizes the richness and complexity that continue to surround the exploration of the Synoptic Problem, thereby proposing the Pentecostal Hermeneutic of the genealogy of Jesus as a possible resolution to the ongoing debate.

Understanding the Genealogy of Jesus Christ in the synoptic debate.

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus differs significantly from Luke's version, leading to various theories about their sources and purposes. Traditional scholarship has proposed different ways to harmonize these genealogies, such as suggesting that Luke presents Mary's genealogy while Matthew presents Joseph's. However, these approaches have their own limitations and do not fully resolve the synoptic problem. One aspect of this debate involves understanding the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which is presented differently in other Gospels. Both Matthew and Luke include genealogies of Jesus, but there are significant differences between the two. Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to David and then to Joseph, the husband of Mary (Matthew 1:1-17). Luke, on the other hand, presents a genealogy that starts from Jesus and goes all the way back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38). The genealogy in Matthew follows a pattern of "father to son" and includes some well-known figures from the Hebrew Bible, such as Abraham, David, and Solomon. Additionally, this genealogy is seen as important by Matthew, as it establishes Jesus as the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies and connects him to the lineage of King David, which was significant in Jewish society. In contrast, the genealogy in Luke traces a reverse pattern, going from Jesus back to Adam. Additionally, Luke's genealogy is much longer and includes different names compared to Matthew's list. While some names overlap, many are distinct. Luke's genealogy is often seen as emphasizing Jesus' connection to all of humanity, highlighting his role as the Savior for both Jews and Gentiles. Scholars have proposed various

¹⁹ Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey* (Baker Books, 2009).

explanations for the differences between the two genealogies. Some suggest that Matthew presents the legal lineage of Jesus through Joseph, while Luke seems to present the biological lineage through Mary. Others argue that these genealogies reflect different theological and literary purposes of the respective Gospel authors. This debate surrounding the genealogy of Jesus in the synoptic Gospels is ongoing, and scholars continue to explore and discuss various perspectives on this topic.

Pentecostal Hermeneutic of Matthew 1:1-17

In examining Matthew's genealogy of Jesus in the context of the synoptic problem, a Pentecostal hermeneutic brings valuable insights by acknowledging the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process.²⁰ Matthew's genealogy, found in the opening verses of his gospel (1:1-17), serves an important purpose in establishing Jesus' Jewish ancestry. Starting with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, Matthew traces the lineage of Jesus through generations, highlighting significant figures such as David and the Babylonian exile.

In this way, Matthew emphasizes Jesus' connection to the ongoing story of God's covenant with Israel. A notable aspect of Matthew's genealogy is the inclusion of four unlikely characters who are also women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. This departure from a typical Jewish genealogy would have caused eyebrows to rise in the original Jewish context. However, a Pentecostal hermeneutic recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in challenging social and cultural expectations.²¹ These women, despite their unconventional circumstances, played crucial roles in the divine plan of redemption. Their presence reminds us that God's grace extends to all, regardless of background or status. A Pentecostal hermeneutic of Matthew's genealogy in the synoptic problem admits the guiding role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process. By recognizing the Spirit's work in the composition of the Gospels, we can appreciate the significance of Matthew's inclusion of unconventional characters and the differences found among the synoptic genealogies. Embracing this perspective allows one to delve into the rich layers of meaning within Scripture, gaining a fuller understanding of God's redemptive plan.²²

In approaching the synoptic problem from a Pentecostal hermeneutic, we open ourselves to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, who continues to reveal the truth and inspire our interpretation of the sacred text. A Pentecostal perspective offers a unique perspective on the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew.²³ Pentecostalism emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in interpreting Scripture and discerning spiritual truths. Applying this hermeneutic to Matthew's genealogy can shed new light and fresh perspectives on its meaning and significance. A Pentecostal hermeneutic as an interpretive approach to scripture is influenced by the beliefs and teachings of Pentecostal Christianity.²⁴ Considering the Pentecostal hermeneutic of the passage in Matthew, several key themes and principles from Pentecostal Christianity can be highlighted.

²⁰ Kenneth J Archer and L William Oliverio, *Constructive Pneumatological Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Christianity* (Springer, 2016); Kwasi Atta Agyapong, "Religion amidst Tares and Weeds: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Hegemony of Non-Religious Movements and Scholarship on Religion in the 21st Century," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, November 8, 2022, 515–38, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20223121>.

²¹ Kwasi Atta Agyapong et al., "A Pentecostal Perspective of the Cultural and Spiritual Significance of the House of Joshua in Jewish and Christian Traditions," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, December 17, 2023, 1481–92, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234137>.

²² Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit Scripture and Community* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009).

²³ Kwasi Atta Agyapong and Emmanuel Foster Asamoah, "The Earth Is the Lord's (Psalm 24:1): A Pentecostal Perspective on the Doctrine of Creation," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, October 20, 2023, 1219–31, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234105>.

²⁴ Marius Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics," *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa* 114, no. 1 (2015): 1–21.

1. The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit

Pentecostals believe in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the world today.²⁵ In Matthew 1:18, it is the Holy Spirit who conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary, marking the beginning of the miraculous incarnation. This highlights the belief that the Holy Spirit is actively involved in bringing about God's purpose and plan.

2. The fulfillment of prophecy

The genealogy in Matthew is seen as evidence of Jesus fulfilling Old Testament prophecies, particularly those concerning the Messiah coming from the lineage of David. Pentecostals place a strong emphasis on the fulfillment of biblical prophecies, believing that they confirm the truth and validity of God's word.²⁶

3. The Inclusion of Gentiles

Pentecostals also emphasize the universal scope of God's redemptive plan. In Matthew's genealogy, there are references to non-Israelite women, such as Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. This emphasizes God's inclusion of Gentiles in his plan of salvation, a theme that is particularly significant to Pentecostals who believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit for all believers, regardless of ethnic or cultural background.²⁷

4. The importance of personal transformation

Pentecostals believe in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.²⁸ The genealogy of Matthew includes individuals with checkered pasts, such as Rahab and Bathsheba, highlighting God's ability to redeem and transform broken lives. This serves as a reminder of the personal transformation that can take place through the work of the Holy Spirit. These themes align with Pentecostal beliefs and serve to affirm and strengthen the faith of believers in the present day.

Pentecostal Hermeneutic of Luke 3:23-38

Firstly, this genealogy reveals the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the birth of Jesus. In verse 22, it is read that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus during his baptism, and this event marked the beginning of his public ministry. This means that the Holy Spirit was actively involved in the conception and birth of Jesus and that his genealogy reflects this divine involvement. Secondly, this passage also shows the importance of understanding the culture and context in which Jesus lived. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit empowers in the understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures in their cultural and historical context.²⁹ Therefore a need to understand the significance of Jesus' lineage within the Jewish culture of the time. Thirdly, this passage also emphasizes the universality of the gospel message. It is seen that Jesus' lineage includes people from different ethnic backgrounds and social classes, from Adam to Abraham to David and beyond. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit is at work reconciling all people to God through Jesus Christ, and this genealogy reflects the inclusiveness of God's plan of salvation. Finally, the Lukan passage highlights the importance of the prophetic voice in Scripture. Throughout this genealogy, there are various references to various prophets, including Samuel, Nathan, and Malachi. Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit empowers believers to prophesy and that the prophetic voice remains a vital part of the Church today.

²⁵ Kwasi Atta Agyapong, "Will You Not Revive Us Again? (Psalm 85:6): An Evaluation of Revival In The Context Of Evangelical-Pentecostal Movements.," *Pentecostalism, Charismaticism and Neo-Prophetic Movements Journal*, May 20, 2021, 11–22, <https://doi.org/10.38159/pecanep.2021221>.

²⁶ W. Luke Worsfold, "Subsequence, Prophecy and Church Order in the Apostolic Church, New Zealand" (Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, 2004). Palmer, O. Robertson, *The Final Word: A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1997).

²⁷ William J Seymour, "Father of Modern Day Pentecostalism," *In the Tradition*, 1976.

²⁸ A. Yong, "The Holy Spirit and the Justice Imperative: Toward a Pentecostal Theory of Social Transformation," *PentecoStudies* 1, no. 7 (2008): 89–106.

²⁹ Stephen Graham, "Thus, Saith the Lord: Biblical Hermeneutics in the Early Pentecostal Movement," *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 121–35.

A Pentecostal hermeneutic of Luke 3:23-38 emphasizes the active involvement of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Jesus, the importance of understanding the cultural and historical context of Scripture, the universality of the gospel message, and the centrality of the prophetic voice in Scripture and in the Church today. A Pentecostal hermeneutic of Luke 3:23-38 within the context of the Synoptic Problem can be approached in several ways as stated below.

1. Historical Context

Understanding the historical context of the passage is important. Luke 3:23-38 provides a genealogy of Jesus, tracing his lineage back to Adam. Pentecostal hermeneutics would acknowledge the historical accuracy of this genealogy and view it as significant in establishing Jesus' human lineage.³⁰

2. Recognition of Luke's Intent

Pentecostal hermeneutics seek to understand the author's intention behind the text. In Luke 3:23-38, Luke provides a genealogy of Jesus, tracing his lineage back to Adam. It highlights Jesus' identification with humanity and his fulfillment of God's promise to restore humanity through the Messiah. Pentecostals view this as a reminder of Jesus' redemptive mission to reconcile humanity with God.

3. Emphasis on the Anointing of the Holy Spirit

Pentecostal theology places a strong emphasis on the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. When examining Luke's genealogy, Pentecostals may explore how the Holy Spirit was at work from generation to generation, preparing the way for Jesus' ministry. This perspective highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering and guiding believers in their own lives for the accomplishment of God's purpose.

4. Connection to Luke's Larger Narrative

Pentecostal hermeneutics often focus on the literal narrative flow of biblical texts. In the broader context of Luke's Gospel, the genealogy of Jesus in chapter 3 serves as a transition from Jesus' birth and early life to the beginning of his public ministry. Pentecostals may consider how this genealogy points to Jesus as the Spirit-empowered Messiah who inaugurates a new era of salvation and calls his followers to participate in the Kingdom of God.

5. The Universal Scope of the Gospel

Pentecostals also believe in the universal scope of the gospel, that it is for all people, regardless of their background or social status. Luke's genealogy includes both Jewish and Gentile names, highlighting God's inclusive plan of salvation. A Pentecostal interpretation of this passage would highlight the significance of this universal aspect of the gospel and emphasize the need for believers to share the good news with people from all walks of life.

6. Engagement with the Synoptic Problem

While it is not central to a Pentecostal hermeneutic, the Synoptic Problem raises questions about the relationship between Luke's genealogy and those found in Matthew and Mark. Pentecostals may approach this by considering the unique perspective and theological emphasis that Luke brings to the genealogy of Jesus Christ. They may also focus on the ways in which the Holy Spirit guided Luke's selection and arrangement of the genealogical material to highlight Jesus' redemptive mission and the role of the Holy Spirit in his life and ministry.

³⁰ Palmer, *The Final Word: A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy*.

To conclude, a Pentecostal hermeneutic of Luke 3:23-38 in the context of the Synoptic Problem explored the text's connections to the redemptive work of Christ, the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, the unique perspective and theological emphasis of Luke, and the place of the passage within Luke's larger narrative of the Kingdom of God.

Genealogical Reconciliation of Jesus in the Synoptic Problem Analysis

The genealogies of Jesus presented in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 have been a subject of discussion within the Synoptic Problem. While both genealogies trace the lineage of Jesus back to King David, they differ from each other, presenting various challenges for reconciliation. One possible explanation for the differences is the redactional activity by the Gospel writers. It is believed that Matthew and Luke may have had different theological and literary purposes, leading them to construct genealogies that suited their respective agendas. Matthew's genealogy emphasizes the royal lineage of Jesus, presenting him as the rightful heir to the throne of David. It highlights the continuity of the messianic line from Abraham to David and then to Jesus. Matthew deliberately divides the genealogy into three sets of 14 generations, thereby providing a structure that aids memorization and highlights key figures.

On the other hand, Luke's genealogy focuses on presenting Jesus as the universal savior, emphasizing his connection to all humanity. Luke traces the lineage of Jesus back to Adam, the father of all mankind, illustrating the inclusive nature of Jesus' mission. Luke's genealogy also serves to establish Jesus' rightful claim as the Son of God, connecting him to Adam, who is referred to as the "son of God" in Luke 3:38. To reconcile the differences between the genealogies, scholars have proposed several explanations. One view suggests that Matthew may have condensed the genealogy, omitting certain names to create a more structured and memorable pattern. Another possibility is that while the genealogies converge at certain points, they may diverge due to different lines of ancestors or adoptive connections. Furthermore, it is important to consider the cultural and historical context of the times. Jewish genealogies were often flexible, and constructed with specific theological or symbolic purposes in mind. Therefore, discrepancies and variations were not uncommon.³¹

Towards Resolving the synoptic problem with the Pentecostal Hermeneutics of the Genealogy of Jesus

"Possibly the greatest literary enigma in history, the Synoptic problem has fascinated generations of academics who have puzzled over the agreements, the disagreements, the variations and the peculiarities of the relationship between the first three of the canonical Gospels."³² The author argues that Pentecostal hermeneutics has within its effrontery the potential to solve the long-standing academic incongruity in the three gospels. The author through diligent literature review and reflective journaling brings out that, Pentecostalism's Spirit-Led Interpretation, Pentecostalism's Redemptive History of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, and Pentecostalism's Typology and Symbolism have the potential to resolve the debate in the synoptic gospels and have been discussed below:

1. Spirit-led Interpretation

Pentecostals believe in the active involvement of the Holy Spirit in understanding and applying biblical texts.³³ Therefore, instead of relying solely on historical or literary analysis, a Pentecostal hermeneutic encourages seekers to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit while studying.³⁴ This approach opens the possibility of receiving fresh insights that can help resolve the synoptic problem. Pentecostalism, as a movement within Christianity, emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding and empowering believers. In the context of the synoptic problem, which refers to the study of the similarities and

³¹ Michele Klein, "Picturing Jewish Genealogy: Using Nineteenth-Century Portrait Albums as a Genealogical Source," *Genealogy* 7, no. 4 (2023): 87.

³² Mark Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way through the Maze*, vol. 80 (A&C Black, 2004).

³³ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit Scripture and Community*.

³⁴ Tony Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit: A Pentecostal Model for Interreligious Dialogue* (Emeth Press, 2011).

differences among the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Pentecostalism offers a unique perspective in understanding the Spirit's role in scriptural interpretation and authorship. The Spirit's leading in Pentecostalism does not refute nor relegate the literal scriptural text, as the exact word of the scripture is cognized as born by the Spirit and therefore historically and theologically accurate without discrepancies. The Spirit-Led interpretation in Pentecostal hermeneutics thrives on the following principles: Divine inspiration of the Gospels, spirit-led hermeneutics, unity in diversity and personal experience and revelation as briefly discussed below.

Divine Inspiration of the Gospels

Pentecostal theology upholds the belief that the Bible is divinely inspired and that the Holy Spirit played a direct role in guiding the authors of the Gospels. Pentecostals believe that the Spirit led the writers to include specific details, shaping the accounts of Jesus' Genealogy in Matthew and Luke.³⁵ The Pentecostal hermeneutic perspective places great importance on the authorship of the Gospels and views them as trustworthy sources influenced and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Pentecostal hermeneutic of the genealogy of Jesus Christ acmes that, since the same Holy Spirit inspired both authors of the gospels, there can be no intended discrepancies apart from the broader perspectives shared for holistic insights on the matter.

Spirit-led Hermeneutics

Pentecostals emphasize the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in interpreting Scripture. They believe that the Spirit provides insight and revelation to individuals as they study and interpret the Bible.³⁶ In the context of the synoptic problem, this means that Pentecostals may approach the study of the Gospels with an openness to the Spirit's guidance, seeking deeper understanding and unity among the accounts.

Unity in Diversity

Pentecostals acknowledge and embrace the existence of variations and differences among the synoptic Gospels just as there are diversities of the Spirit's gifts on believers for the common good of the church. They emphasize that these differences do not necessarily undermine the central message and purpose of the Gospels but rather reflect the diversity and context of the authors, how the Holy Spirit led them and their intended audiences.³⁷ Instead of viewing the differences as contradictions, Pentecostals perceive them as complementary perspectives that provide a holistic understanding of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Personal Experience and Revelation

Pentecostalism places a strong emphasis on personal experience with the Holy Spirit.³⁸ This experiential aspect of faith may lead Pentecostals to prioritize their individual encounters with God over academic or scholarly debates concerning the synoptic problem. They may believe that the Spirit can reveal specific insights into the Gospels that may not be readily explained using traditional historical-critical methods. It is important to note that while Pentecostalism offers a unique perspective, individual Pentecostals may have differing views on the synoptic problem and its resolution. However, the movement's emphasis on the Holy Spirit's role in interpretation and authorship can provide additional layers of insight when approaching the study of synoptic gospels.

³⁵ Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics"; Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit Scripture and Community*.

³⁶ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit Scripture and Community*.

³⁷ Paynter, "How the Synoptic Gospels Were Written an Evangelical Introduction to The Synoptic Problem, and to Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism."

³⁸ Adam Stewart, "Quenching the Spirit: The Transformation of Religious Identity and Experience in Three Canadian Pentecostal Churches," 2012; Kwabena J Asamoah-Gyadu, "The Church in the African State: The Pentecostal/Charismatic Experience in Ghana," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1, no. 2 (1998): 51–57.

2. Redemptive History of the genealogy in the synoptic problem

Pentecostals understand the genealogy of Jesus Christ as a part of God's redemptive history. They see it not only as a list of names or exclusive facts but as a record of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises and establishing His kingdom.³⁹ Through this lens, the differences between Matthew and Luke's genealogies become complementary rather than contradictory. It becomes evident that Matthew emphasizes Jesus' Davidic lineage to present Him as the long-awaited Messiah, while Luke focuses on Jesus' universal significance as the Savior of all humanity. In the genealogy of Jesus, both Matthew and Luke provide a list of names tracing Jesus' lineage back to David and to Adam. However, there are significant variations between the two genealogies, particularly in the names listed and the number of generations mentioned.

Matthew's genealogy starts with Abraham and comprises three sections of fourteen generations each, leading to Jesus. The purpose of this genealogy in Matthew's Gospel is to demonstrate Jesus' rightful claim to the Messianic lineage as the Son of David and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

On the other hand, Luke's genealogy traces Jesus' lineage back even further, through David, Abraham, and finally to Adam. Luke's genealogy, unlike the Matthew account, Luke is presented in reverse order, starting from Jesus through Joseph, and going back to Adam. This suggests a different theological emphasis, focusing on Jesus as the universal Savior of all humanity.

Regarding God's redemptive history in these genealogies, both Matthew's and Luke's accounts highlight God's faithfulness and sovereignty throughout history. They demonstrate that Jesus' coming was not an arbitrary event but part of God's larger plan of salvation for humanity. Matthew's genealogy emphasizes the continuity between the Old Testament promises and Jesus' arrival. By tracing Jesus' lineage all the way back to Abraham and David, Matthew shows that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies. He presents Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, the heir to David's throne, and the one who would establish God's kingdom on earth.

Luke's genealogy, on the other hand, emphasizes Jesus' universal mission of salvation for the entire humankind. By going beyond the Jewish lineage, Luke shows that Jesus is not just the Messiah of Israel but also the Savior of all people. Luke presents Jesus as the new Adam, the one who would redeem all humanity from the effects of sin and restore the broken relationship between God and humanity.

In both texts of the genealogies, God's redemptive history is on display. They show that Jesus' birth was not a random occurrence but the culmination of God's plan of salvation throughout history. Through Jesus, God brings about redemption, restoration, and reconciliation for both the Jewish people and all humanity and thus solving the seemingly discrepancies in the synoptic debate. The differences in Matthew and Luke are complementary and not simply an exposure of a weakness in the unity of the gospel narratives.

3. Typology and Symbolism

Pentecostals also approach genealogy through typology and symbolism. They recognize how Old Testament figures and events prefigure and point to Jesus' ministry and mission.⁴⁰ By identifying the typological connections within the genealogy, Pentecostals can discern deeper meanings and connections between the accounts and the synoptic problem. This approach allows for a more holistic understanding of the Gospels and their purpose other than the assumed discrepancies in the three gospels. Typology is a method of biblical interpretation that finds foreshadowing or prefiguring of future events or individuals in the Old Testament.⁴¹ In the case of the genealogies of Jesus, there is an emphasis on connecting Jesus to important figures from Israel's history, such as Abraham, David, and

³⁹ Graham, "Thus, Saith the Lord: Biblical Hermeneutics in the Early Pentecostal Movement."

⁴⁰ Dorothy A. Lee, "Symbolism and 'Signs' in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Oxford Handbook of Johannine Studies*, Oxford Handbooks, ed. Judith M. Lieu and Martinus C. de Boer (Oxford Academic, 2018), 259–73.

⁴¹ Clayton J Williams, *The Shadow of Christ in the Book of Job* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017).

the exilic period. Pentecostals, like many Christians, would see Jesus as the fulfillment of these promises and the culmination of God's plan. Symbolism can also be found in the genealogies. For example, the number 14 appears three times in the lineage recorded in Matthew's Gospel. This is seen as symbolizing the name David, as the numerical value of the Hebrew letters that make up David's name is 14. Some Pentecostals may interpret this as a symbolic representation of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah, emphasizing his role as the king of Israel. The genealogy of Jesus Christ as presented in the synoptic gospels (Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38) serves several typological and symbolic purposes as stated below.

Messianic Typology

Both genealogies trace Jesus' lineage back to King David, highlighting his royal lineage and fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. This typological connection establishes Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Universal Salvation

The inclusion of both Jewish and Gentile ancestors in Jesus' genealogy signifies that salvation is offered to all people, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. Matthew's genealogy includes several women of non-Jewish descent, such as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, highlighting the inclusion of Gentiles in God's redemptive plan.

Genealogy as a Narrative Framework

The genealogies serve as a structural device to frame the narrative of Jesus' life. Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy, underlining Jesus' heritage as the rightful king, while Luke places it shortly before Jesus' public ministry, emphasizing his divine mission.

Theological Symbolism

The number fourteen, which appears as a symbolic pattern in Matthew's genealogy, is significant. Matthew divides the genealogy into three sets of fourteen generations. This grouping signifies completeness or perfection, as fourteen is twice the Hebrew numerical value of David's name. It suggests that Jesus is the culmination and fulfillment of God's promises throughout history.

Reconciliation of Old and New Testaments

Both genealogies connect Jesus to Israel's history and the Old Testament covenant with God, illustrating the continuity between the Old and New Testaments. This linkage serves to validate Jesus' identity and mission in the eyes of Jewish readers.

Regarding typology and symbolism in the variations of the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, it's important to note that scholars have debated the differences and inconsistencies between them, nonetheless the typological and symbolic aspects primarily apply to each gospel text independently rather than to their harmonization and this has the budding of easing the synoptic problem.

Pentecostal Recommendations for the Similarities and Differences towards a Complementary Viewpoint

Gleanings from the discussions of the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew and Luke bring out what has accounted for the similarities and differences in the synoptic problem and as a result propose that, the assumed problem is a complementary perspective other than the proposed parallels or disparities.

Similarities between the Synoptic Gospels and the Synoptic Problem

From the foregoing discussions within the Pentecostal framework, the similarities in the Synoptic Gospels can be attributed to several factors including the result of divine inspiration, shared oral traditions, common written sources, and the individual perspectives of the Gospel writers as briefly

discussed below.⁴² Firstly, on the Inspiration by the Holy Spirit: Pentecostals believe in the active work of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the writers of Scripture.⁴³ They believe that the Holy Spirit guided the Gospel writers in recording the life, teachings, and works of Jesus. This divine inspiration could explain why there are similarities in the narratives and teachings found in the Synoptic Gospels. Secondly, Oral Tradition accounts for the similarities in the synoptic problem. Pentecostals recognize the importance of oral tradition in transmitting the teachings and stories of Jesus.⁴⁴ They believe that the early Christian community preserved and passed on these traditions through oral means. These shared oral traditions could account for the similarities in the Synoptic Gospels. Thirdly the usage of Common Sources accounts for the similarities in the synoptic gospels.⁴⁵ Pentecostals acknowledge the possibility that the Gospel writers may have used common written or oral sources in their composition. For example, the Gospel of Mark is generally or often seen as a source used by both Matthew and Luke, explaining the similarities in their accounts. Lastly, the Personal Perspectives and Context of the gospel writers influenced their writings and similar contexts or theology in some respects can necessitate the similarities amongst them.⁴⁶ Pentecostals also recognize that each Gospel writer had their own unique perspective, theological emphasis, and literary style.⁴⁷

Differences between the Synoptic Gospels

When comparing the genealogies in Matthew with those in Luke, discrepancies emerge. While Matthew emphasizes the royal lineage of Jesus through Joseph, Luke highlights the bloodline of Mary. These differences, when viewed through a Pentecostal hermeneutic, invite readers to consider the influence of the Spirit in shaping the perspectives of the gospel writers.⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit, actively at work in the composition and transmission of the Gospels, may have inspired the authors to highlight different aspects of Jesus' genealogy as a means of conveying holistic theological truth.

Complementary Perspectives

The afore recommendations present that, rather than viewing the synoptic problem as a discrepancy or contradiction, the devised Pentecostal hermeneutic model embraces the diversity of perspectives presented by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Each writer offers unique insights into the life and ministry of Jesus, contributing to a holistic understanding of his identity and mission. While the variations in genealogies may puzzle scholars, a Pentecostal hermeneutic reminds us that the Spirit can inspire multiple perspectives that collectively enrich our grasp of biblical truth.

CONCLUSION

The synoptic problem continues to fascinate biblical scholars, but it remains far from fully resolved. However, by adopting a Pentecostal hermeneutic of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew and Luke,' new insights and perspectives are shed on the perplexing debate. Adherence to Spirit-Led Interpretation, understanding the redemptive history of the genealogy, and an appreciation for typology and symbolism, lead to resolving the synoptic problem by presenting a comprehensive, diverse, and complimentary understanding of the Gospels. Decisively, examining the Pentecostal hermeneutic of the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 provides valuable insights towards resolving the synoptic problem. By delving into the intricate details and theological implications of

⁴² Amos Yong, *The Spirit of Creation: Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal- Charismatic Imagination*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2011); Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

⁴³ Seymour, "Father of Modern Day Pentecostalism"; Nel, "Attempting to Define a Pentecostal Hermeneutics."

⁴⁴ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit Scripture and Community*.

⁴⁵ Paynter, "How the Synoptic Gospels Were Written an Evangelical Introduction to The Synoptic Problem, and to Source, Form, and Redaction Criticism."

⁴⁶ Steven Jack Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2010).

⁴⁷ Donald W. Dayton, "Theological Roots of Pentecostalism," *Pneuma* 2, no. 1 (1980): 3–21,

<https://doi.org/10.1163/157007480X00017>; Lauren Pfister, "A History of Chinese Christian Hymnody: From Its Missionary Origins to Contemporary Indigenous Productions," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 34, no. 4 (2010): 240.

⁴⁸ Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit Scripture and Community*.

these genealogical accounts, academics uncover the underlying intentions of the Gospel writers and gain a deeper understanding of the Christological significance within the texts. Building upon the foundation of Pentecostal hermeneutics, which emphasizes the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, this study offers a seminal and fresh perspective on the synoptic problem and contributes to the ongoing scholarly dialogue. Ultimately, through careful analysis and interpretative lenses, the Pentecostal approach sheds light on the complexities of the genealogies, offering a pathway towards an all-inclusive resolution of the synoptic problem.

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