

Name:

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## The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction

**Directions:** Using your Bible, compare the stories listed below. For each set of stories, pay attention to what is similar and what is unique. Fill in the blanks below.

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### Peter's Confession & The First Prediction of the Passion

MK 8:27-33 || MT 16:13-23

1. While both Mk and Mt agree that \_\_\_\_\_ accurately identified Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_, they do not agree on how Jesus responded to the title. In Mk, Peter is \_\_\_\_\_ by Jesus, apparently because he assumes the \_\_\_\_\_ to be a \_\_\_\_\_, as did most Jews at the time, therefore Peter does not understand when Jesus describes himself as the "\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_" who "must \_\_\_\_\_ greatly... be \_\_\_\_\_ by the elders... be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ after three days."
2. In Mt, however, when Peter confesses Jesus as \_\_\_\_\_, Mt adds the title "\_\_\_\_\_ of the living \_\_\_\_\_." And instead of being \_\_\_\_\_ by Jesus, Peter is praised, told he will be the \_\_\_\_\_ upon which Jesus builds the \_\_\_\_\_, and given the keys to the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Walking on Water

MK 6:45-52 || MT 14:22-33

3. In Mk, when Jesus walks on water, the disciples mistake him for a \_\_\_\_\_, and when they do realize who he is, they do not understand what it means that he has the power to control the \_\_\_\_\_ (as \_\_\_\_\_ did in the OT), and Mk claims that their lack of understanding was due to the fact that "their \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_."
4. In Mt's version of this story, while the disciples do mistake Jesus for a \_\_\_\_\_, Mt contains unique material involving \_\_\_\_\_, who tries to \_\_\_\_\_ on the water towards Jesus, but starts to \_\_\_\_\_." When \_\_\_\_\_ rescues him, he criticizes \_\_\_\_\_ for his "little \_\_\_\_\_," which although critical, is not as harsh as Mk's claim that the disciples had hardened \_\_\_\_\_, like \_\_\_\_\_ in the OT story of the \_\_\_\_\_. Unlike Mk, Mt also mentions that "those who were in the boat did [Jesus] \_\_\_\_\_, saying, 'Truly you are the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.'"

### The Ambition of James and John

MK 10:35-44 || MT 20:20-28

5. In Mk, it is the disciples \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who ask \_\_\_\_\_ for permission to sit at his right and left in the \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus responds by asking if they are willing to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ that he will \_\_\_\_\_, or

be \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ with which he will be \_\_\_\_\_ . To which they respond, " \_\_\_\_\_ ."

6. Mt retains Jesus' question to the disciples, but he changes the story so that rather than \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ themselves asking, it is their \_\_\_\_\_ that asks the question.

### The Transfiguration of Jesus & Coming of Elijah

Mk 9:2-13 || Mt 17:1-13

7. In Mk, when Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ before the disciples, \_\_\_\_\_ calls him by the title \_\_\_\_\_, and says, "Let us make three \_\_\_\_\_..." A voice from heaven identifies Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, but Mk gives no indication that the disciples understand. when the disciples descend the mountain with Jesus, they ask him why the scribes predict the coming of \_\_\_\_\_, and while Jesus says that he has already come, Mk again gives no indication that the disciples understood what he meant.
8. In Mt, rather than calling Jesus by the title \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ calls him \_\_\_\_\_, and says, "If you wish, I will make three \_\_\_\_\_, indicating that he will only do so if it is Jesus' will. Mt also mentions the voice from heaven, but in his account when the disciples heard it, they "fell \_\_\_\_\_ and were very much \_\_\_\_\_." Also Mt mentions that when the disciples descended the mountain and asked Jesus about the coming of \_\_\_\_\_, they recognized that he had already returned in the person of \_\_\_\_\_."

### In Summary

9. Each of these stories has some common characteristics, such as the fact that Mt prefers the title \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus rather than \_\_\_\_\_, he frequently mentions the disciples \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus as an indication that they recognize who he is, and they even call him by the title \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. This indicates several things: First Mt clearly has a more favorable opinion of the \_\_\_\_\_ than Mk, and that is especially true of \_\_\_\_\_, who is the subject of several stories unique to Mt. Rather than completely lacking \_\_\_\_\_, Mt thinks the they had " \_\_\_\_\_," a less condemning criticism. Second, the theme of the "Messianic \_\_\_\_\_," so prevalent in Mk, is not present in Mt at all. Which means both that he is recognized by his \_\_\_\_\_, and that those who do not recognize him have no excuse.