

Stefano Tarocchi¹
Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Centrale
Firenze

Baptism in the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles²

I. The threefold synoptic tradition

The use of terms concerning baptism in Mark's Gospel, being the core of the threefold tradition, shows a meaningful trajectory. The two main events are,

¹ Ksiądz Stefano Tarocchi, kapłan archidiecezji florenckiej, jest profesorem i wykładowcą Wydziału Teologicznego Włoch Środkowych we Florencji oraz redaktorem naczelnym czasopiśma „Vivens homo”. W latach 2010-2017 pełnił funkcję dziekana wydziału. Autor dzieł z zakresu teologii biblijnej: *Marco. Il primo Vangelo*, EDB, Bologna 1999, *Luca. Il Vangelo della salvezza*, EDB, Bologna 2000; *Paolo. Lettere della prigionia. Efesini, Filippesi, Colossesi, Filemone*, Dabar – Logos – Parola. Lectio Divina Popolare NT, EMP; Padova 2004.

² See also Jn 1:29-34; Acts 1:8; 4:27; 10:37-38; L. Hartmann, “Baptism”, D.N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York – London – Toronto – Sydney – Auckland 1992: 383-394; G. Barth, *Il battesimo in epoca protocristiana*, Paideia, Brescia 1987; W. Bauer - F.W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2001³; M.-É. Boismard, *Le baptême chrétien selon le Nouveau Testament*, Les éditions du Cerf, Paris 2001; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, Klincksieck, Paris 2009; E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, I, Paideia, Brescia 2014; L. Hartmann, “Baptism”, in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York – London – Toronto – Sydney – Auckland 1992; P.A. Kaswalder, *Galilea terra della luce. Descrizione geografica, storica e archeologica di Galilea e Golan*, Milano 2012; Légasse S., *Alle origini del battesimo: fondamenti biblici del rito cristiano*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo 1994; E. A. Nida – J.P. LOUW, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, United Bible Societies 1999; R.P. Merendino, *Testi anticotestamentari in Mk 1:2-8: “Riv Bibl It” 35 (1987) 3-25*; M. Quesnel, *Baptisés dans l'Esprit: Baptême et Esprit dans les Actes des Apôtres*, Cerf, Paris 1985; L. Rocci, *Vocabolario Greco-Italiano 2011*: Società editrice Dante Alighieri, Roma 2011; P. Sacchi, *Storia del secondo tempio. Israele tra VI secolo a.C. e I secolo d.C.*, SEI, Torino 1994; P. Tavadon, *Les métamorphoses de l'esprit: une exégèse du logion des deux baptêmes, Mt 3: 10-12 et parallèles*, Gabalda, Paris 2002; D. Vigne, *Christ au Jourdain: le baptême de Jésus dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne*, Gabalda, Paris 1992; Weigand P., οἰκος, in H. Balz – G. Schneider (edd.), *Dizionario Esetico del Nuovo Testamento, II*, Paideia, Brescia 1998.

on the one hand John the Baptist's baptism opening Mark's narration, and on the other hand the baptism of Jesus. Anyway, in the text of Mark, the reference to baptism retains a fivefold meaning. In fact it is used (1) for the Baptist; (2) for Jesus; (3) to describe the Passion; (4) to designate the baptism of Christians; (5) to designate a cleansing ritual.

There is a complex interaction between Jesus' mission, His baptism (its meaning for all believers) and John's baptism. These baptizing acts share the same meaning and reach, for they consist of a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins", an element which is softened in the equivalent passages by Matthew and Luke given the implications suggested by a reference to the interpretation of Christ's figure, revealing nonetheless some important interpretative keys.

It is true that Luke announces that John is "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (εις ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν)" (Lk 3:3),³ but only Paul goes as far as saying that: "For our sake he made the sinless one a victim for sin, so that in him we might become the uprightness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).

It has been speculated that, by means of a redactional intervention, Matthew transferred Mark's phrase ("for the forgiveness of sins [εις ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν]")⁴ from the baptismal context to the one of the Last Supper in the presence of Jesus and the disciples, on the eve of His Passion. As a matter of fact, the passage reads: "this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν)" (Mt 26:28). Thus, a powerful bond is created between baptism and the Eucharist in an unequivocal context, charged with great meaning.

1. John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism

As a matter of fact, Mark opens his Gospel with the baptism of Jesus. At first John the Baptist is introduced, and the solemn *formula καθὼς γέγραπται*⁵ refers to a quotation of a phrase put under the authority of Isaiah. It is made up of two Old Testament texts⁶ related to the prophet's text⁷ qualifying John's mission as centered on the themes of the "desert" and the "messenger":

³ Luke himself says: "in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47); cf. Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 26:18.

⁴ Mk 1:4.

⁵ See Mk 9:13; Lk 2:23; Acts 7:42; 15:15; Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4...

⁶ See R. P. Merendino, *Testi anticotestamentari in Mk 1:2-8*: "Riv Bibl It" 35 (1987) 3-25; E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, I, pp. 102-114.

⁷ Is 40:3; cf. Es 23:20; Mal 3:1.

Look, I am going to send my messenger in front of you to prepare your way before you (ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου). A voice of one that cries in the desert (φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ): Prepare a way for the Lord (ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου), make his paths straight (εὐθείας ποιείτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν).⁸

Let us now see in parallel the Masoretic text and the LXX version of Isaiah's oracle (the "consolation book"):⁹

A voice cries [qôl qôrç ^ç], 'Prepare in the desert a way for Yahweh [bammidbâr pannû derek yhw]. Make a straight highway for our God across the wastelands (Is 40:3 TM)	φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιείτε τὰς τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν (Is 40:3 LXX).
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

As we can see, Mark makes a deliberate change of the Masoretic text, in order to remark the "desert" theme.¹⁰ If according to the Hebrew text of Isaiah, the desert was where the way of the Lord was supposed to be prepared, in the Gospel of Mark the desert is the place where John proclaims a baptism of repentance.

Actually, the appearance of John the Baptist in the narrative, occurs as follows:

John the Baptist ([ὁ] βαπτίζων)¹¹ was in the desert (ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ), proclaiming (κηρύσσων) a baptism of repentance (βάπτισμα μετανοίας) for the forgiveness of sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν). All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him (ἐβαπτίζοντο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ) in the river Jordan they confessed their sins (ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας) (Mk 1:4-5).

John's activity is presented by Mark as standing upon two parallel acts, namely baptising and proclaiming. Looking at the textual tradition which uses the expression "**the Baptist**" (ὁ βαπτιστής),¹² Metzger agrees and underlines the need to use the article ὁ before the noun βαπτίζων.¹³

⁸ Mk 1:2-3.

⁹ " 'Console my people, console them,' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and cry to her that her period of service is ended, that her guilt has been atoned for, that, from the hand of Yahweh, she has received double punishment for all her sins' "(Is 40:1-2).

¹⁰ See Mt 3:3 instead: "This was the man spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said: A voice of one that cries in the desert, 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight'"; Lk 3:4-5: "as it is written in the book of the sayings of Isaiah the prophet: 'A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight! Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be levelled, winding ways be straightened and rough roads made smooth'".

¹¹ See Mk 6:14: Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων; also Joh 1:28.31.33; 3:23; 10:40. Abbiamo invece Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστής in Mk 6:25; 8:28; Mt 3:1; 11:11.12; 14:2.8; 16:14; 17:13; Lk 7:20.33; 9:19.

¹² See Mk 6:25; 8:28; Mt 3:1; 11:11.12; 14:12; 16:14; 17:3; Lk 7:20.33; 8:18; 9:19.

¹³ See B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, p. 62. In the text, the article is evidenced between brackets: [ὁ].

The text then runs: “I have baptised you with water (ἐβάπτισα ὑμᾶς ὕδατι), but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit (βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ)”. The difference between John’s and Jesus’ baptism is here underlined, moving from water to the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Luke then adds: “he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire”.¹⁵

Straight after John the Baptist’s speech on his role and the one of Jesus, Mark lets Jesus enter his narration (ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ τῆς Γαλιλαίας: Mk 1,9a)¹⁶. The origin of Jesus is underlined by Matthew, too (ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην); he also gives a brief chronological reference (τότε) and adds Jesus’ destination and purpose (πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ).¹⁷ In Matthew a dialogue between John and Jesus regarding baptism is recorded: the Baptist claims his need to be baptised instead of Jesus (Ἐγὼ χρεῖαν ἔχω ὑπὸ σοῦ βαπτισθῆναι, καὶ σὺ ἔρχῃ πρὸς με) and as an answer he hears from Jesus about a divine plan to be accomplished (πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην).¹⁸ After this, John consents.

<p>Mk 1,9a It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee (ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ τῆς Γαλιλαίας) and was baptised (ἐβαπτίσθη) in the Jordan by John (εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου)</p>	<p>Mt 3,13-15 Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan (ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην), to be baptised by John (τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ). John tried to dissuade him, with the words, ‘It is I who need baptism from you (ὑπὸ σοῦ βαπτισθῆναι), and yet you come to me!’ But Jesus replied, ‘Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands (πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην).’ Then John gave in to him.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The event of the baptism of Jesus is recorded by Mark by using concise, solemn words: ἐβαπτίσθη εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου.¹⁹ Mark is not afraid of leaving the reader with the conviction that there is a total communion between Jesus and the people coming to the Baptist to receive “a baptism of repentance (βάπτισμα μετανοίας) for the forgiveness of sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν)”. The last concept is repeated again: “they confessed their sins (ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας)”.²⁰

¹⁴ See Mt 3:11; At 1:5.

¹⁵ Lk 3:16.

¹⁶ See P.A. Kaswalder *Galilea terra della luce. Descrizione geografica, storica e archeologica di Galilea e Golan*, Milano 2012; E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, I, pp. 119-124.

¹⁷ Mt 3:13.

¹⁸ See Mt 5:6.10.20; 6:1.33; 21:32.

¹⁹ Mk 1:9 b.

²⁰ Mk 1:4.5.

It is possible that this theme is revisited in the Fourth Gospel: “ ‘Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου)!’ ”.²¹

The Epistle to the Hebrews states that Jesus “is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας)” (Eb 4:15).

All of Matthew’s narration consists of the past participle βαπτισθεῖς. Luke seems to distinguish between the baptism of people and the one of Jesus, accompanied by the action of prayer. In Matthew there is no word about the fact that the baptism of Jesus is operated by John; Luke, according to his style, lets the description of John’s mission and its tragic epilogue precede the event of baptism.²² Both the passive aorist voices of being baptised of Jesus and of the people can be intended as theological passive.

The Gospels then read:

<p>^{9b} was baptised in the Jordan by John (ἐβαπτίσθη εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου). ¹⁰ And at once, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.’ (Mk 1:9-11)</p>	<p>¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptised (βαπτισθεῖς) he at once came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. ¹⁷ And suddenly there was a voice from heaven, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.’ (Mt 3:16-17)</p>	<p>²¹Now it happened that when all the people had been baptised (ἐν τῷ βαπτισθῆναι ἅπαντα τὸν λαόν) and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer (Ἰησοῦ βαπτισθέντος καὶ προσευχομένου), heaven opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a physical form, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son; today have I fathered you.’ (Lk 3:21-22)</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

²¹ Jn 1:29; cf. Jn 1:36). The verb αἴρω can have these two meanings: 1. to raise from the ground, raise, lift, take up, pick up; 2. to take upon oneself and carry what has been raised, to bear (così H. Lid-del – R. Scott – H.S. Jones *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1968.1973; see also L. Rocci, *Vocabolario Greco-Italiano* 2011: Società editrice Dante Alighieri, Roma 2011; J.P. Louw – E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, United Bible Societies 1999; W. Bauer - F. W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2001³.

²² The text reads: “Herod the tetrarch, censured by John for his relations with his brother’s wife Herodias and for all the other crimes he had committed, added a further crime to all the rest by shutting John up in prison” (Lk 3:19-20). In Matthew the baptism is followed by the description of the opened heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit. From the cloud, a voice is directed to all who are there. Luke adds to the baptism the detail of prayer (cf. Lk 5:37; 13:3; 14:33), at the very moment in which the Spirit comes down in the shape of a dove, and then comes the voice directed to the Son.

The narration goes on²³ and underlines the fact that for Jesus only, while he comes out of water (*ἀναβαίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος*), the “heavens” open (being the plural in Matthew, too: εἶδεν σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς,²⁴ while Luke has the singular “heaven” repeated twice).

The Spirit is made present,²⁵ (εἶδεν ... τὸ πνεῦμα) descending “like a dove” (ὡς περιστέρην καταβαίνον εἰς αὐτόν). The phrase seems to refer to the way the Spirit comes down, more than to his physical appearance. Luke only tells: “in a physical form, like a dove” (σωματικῶ εἶδει ὡς περιστέρην).²⁶ In the following theophany²⁷ the voice “from heaven” is directed to the Son, as it is in Luke, while in Matthew it is directed to all bystanders.²⁸ Jesus is presented as “servant of JHWH”, and moreover as the only Son of the Father. Two expressions can be noted: 1) “my favour rests on you” (ὁ ἀγαπητός);²⁹ 2) Is 42,1: “my chosen one in whom my soul delights” (ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου, προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἡ ψυχή μου).

2. References to John’s baptism

The Baptist is mentioned again in Mark, in Peter’s confession in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. This can be read in the parallel ones, too.³⁰

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages round Caesarea Philippi. On the way he put this question to his disciples, ‘Who do people say I am?’ And they told him, ‘John the Baptist, others Elijah, others again, one of the prophets.’ ‘But you,’ he asked them, ‘who do you say I am?’ Peter spoke up and said to him, ‘You are the Christ.’ (Mk 8,27-29).

At the climax of the narration of the Transfiguration, in Matthew only, Jesus’ order is expressed in the following way:

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, ‘Tell no one about this vision until the Son of man has risen from the dead.’ And the disciples put this question to him, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ He replied, ‘Elijah is indeed coming, and he will set everything right again; however, I tell you that Elijah has come already and they did not recognise him but treated him as they pleased; and the Son of man will suffer similarly at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking of John the Baptist (Mt 17,9-13).

²³ Mk 1:10.

²⁴ Mt 3:16.

²⁵ Mat 3:16 has “the Spirit of God”; Lk 3:22 has “the Holy Spirit”.

²⁶ Lk 3:22.

²⁷ Mk 1:11.

²⁸ Mt 3:17; cf. Mk 9:7: the Transfiguration.

²⁹ See Gen 22:2.12.16; see also Is 42:1 (ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου), as a parallel to παῖς (= servant).

³⁰ See Mt 16:14: “And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets’”.

In Mark the reference to John the Baptist is in the background, while Luke completely dismisses it.

And they put this question to him, ‘Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ He said to them, ‘Elijah is indeed first coming to set everything right again; yet how is it that the scriptures say about the Son of man that he must suffer grievously and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Elijah has come and they have treated him as they pleased, just as the scriptures say about him.’ (Mk 9:11-13).³¹

Another important reference to John’s baptism can be found in Lk 7,29-30,

All the people who heard him, and the tax collectors too, acknowledged God’s saving justice by accepting baptism from John; but by refusing baptism (μὴ βαπτισθέντες ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ) from him the Pharisees and the lawyers thwarted (ἠθέτησαν) God’s plan for them.³²

The use of the verb ἀθετέω implies a strong juridical connotation: the ones who rejected John’s baptism, rejected the Lord’s will (βουλὴν).³³ So, John’s baptism rejected by the Pharisees and the lawyers “not having themselves baptised by him (μὴ βαπτισθέντες ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ)” impedes God’s will (τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ) to be actuated on them.³⁴

In Mark’s narration of the ministry in Jerusalem, John’s baptism is the key to understanding Jesus’ mission. John’s baptism accomplishes God’s will, while Jesus acts on behalf of God. This is the key to get the sense of his enigmatic answer:

They came to Jerusalem again, and as Jesus was walking in the Temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, ‘What authority have you for acting like this? Or who gave you authority to act like this?’ Jesus said to them, ‘And I will ask you a question, just one; answer me and I will tell you my authority for acting like this. John’s baptism, what was its origin, heavenly or human? Answer me that.’ And they argued this way among themselves, ‘If we say heavenly, he will say, “Then why did you refuse to believe him?” But dare we say human?’ – they had the people to fear, for everyone held that John had been

³¹ In this text, which is hard to interpret, Elijah is read as having John the Baptist in the background. Malachi says that Elijah’s venue precedes the Messiah’s one. Elijah is referred to the Baptist, whose violent death anticipates that of Jesus Christ, the Messiah: “Look, I shall send you the prophet Elijah before the great and awesome Day of Yahweh comes. He will reconcile parents to their children and children to their parents, to forestall my putting the country under the curse of destruction” (Ml 3:23-24).

³² See Mt 21:32: “For John came to you, showing the way of uprightness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him”; also Lk 7:18-23, 24-30; Mt 11:2-11.

³³ The *logion* appears after the question that the disciples of the Baptist ask in his name: “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, “Are you the one who is to come or are we to expect someone else?” (Lk 7:20) and Jesus’ answer to them and to all the bystanders (cf. Lk 7:24-28).

³⁴ Lk 7:30; cf. Acts 20:27: “for I have without faltering put before you the whole of God’s purpose” (βουλὴν); Eph 1:11; Heb 6:17.

a real prophet. So their reply to Jesus was, ‘We do not know.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Nor will I tell you my authority for acting like this.’ (Mt 11:27-33).³⁵

The third announcement of the Passion bears reference to the baptism,³⁶ in Jesus’ answer to the request made by Jacob and John to both have a seat at each side of Jesus in His glory:

‘You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I shall drink, or be baptised with the baptism (τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι) with which I shall be baptised (βαπτισθῆναι)?’ They replied, ‘We can.’ Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I shall drink you shall drink,³⁷ and with the baptism with which I shall be baptised (τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι) you shall be baptised (βαπτισθήσεσθε)’ (Mt 10:38-39).

A parallel to this can be found in Matthew (Mt 20,20-23) after the request of the mother of Zebedeus’ sons, which modifies the text of Mark we have just referred to.

A *logion* is added in Luke: “There is a baptism I must still receive, and what constraint I am under until it is completed!”³⁸ It comes out of a series of *logia*, relying on an apocalyptic background, dealing with the sense of the mission of Jesus who did not come “to bring peace on earth... but rather division”.³⁹

3. Other uses

In Matthew, speaking of the mission of the Risen Jesus and the sending of the Eleven, we read:⁴⁰

Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise (βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς) them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος) (Mt 28:19).⁴¹

Even though some may think of a redactional choice, it is difficult to deny that behind this command lies the will of Jesus himself, then extended in the expression to all the three divine Persons.⁴² Jesus’ authority (“All authority in

³⁵ See Mt 21:23-27; Lk 20:1-8.

³⁶ Mk 10:32-34; cf. Mat 20:17-17-199; Lk 18:31-33.

³⁷ See Mt 20:23; Mk 14:36; Is 51:17.

³⁸ Lk 12:50.

³⁹ Lk 12:51.

⁴⁰ Mt 28:16.

⁴¹ See E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, pp. 160-166.

⁴² So as in E. Ferguson *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, p. 164; M. Quesnel, *Baptisés dans l'Esprit*, pp. 79-119.

heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18) founds the mission that is assigned to the Eleven.

Baptism is the distinctive sign of the mission of the Eleven, in their dimension of faith and, at the same time, at a distance from the Risen Jesus,⁴³ to make the whole mankind disciples, and most of all to do this in the name of the Three Divine Persons.⁴⁴

In Mark’s “canonical” conclusion, influenced by different elements coming from the tradition, the baptism of believers appears as it was expressed by tradition and related to the mission after the Resurrection of Christ: “Whoever believes and is baptised (βαπτισθεις) will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk 16:16).

The synoptic tradition shows a further usage of terms related to baptism.⁴⁵ The verb and the noun⁴⁶ have kept the meaning of “immerge, immersion”, typical of the verb βάπτω:⁴⁷

The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered round him, and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, keep the tradition of the elders and never eat without washing (ἐάν μὴ βαπτίσωνται) their arms as far as the elbow; and on returning from the market place they never eat without first sprinkling themselves. There are also many other observances which have been handed down to them to keep, concerning the washing of cups (βαπτισμοὺς ποτηρίων) and pots and bronze dishes. So the Pharisees and scribes asked him, ‘Why do your disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean hands?’ (Mk 7:1-5).

On this purpose in Luke it can be read:

The Pharisee saw this and was surprised that he had not first washed (ἐβαπτίσθη) before the meal. But the Lord said to him, ‘You Pharisees! You clean (καθαρίζετε) the outside of cup and plate, while inside yourselves you are filled with extortion and wickedness’ (Lk 11:38-39).⁴⁸

⁴³ Cf. Mt 28:17: “When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated”.

⁴⁴ Cf. Acts 8:16: “baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus”; Acts 22:16: “Hurry and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”

⁴⁵ For purity questions, see Mk 7:1-23; Mt 15:1-20; Mt 23:1-36; Lk 11:37-54.

⁴⁶ Respectively βαπτίζω e βάπτισμα. For P. Chantraine (*Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, Klincksieck, Paris 2009: pp. 156.1279-1280), form βαπτίζω is a deverbative from βάπτω “immerge”, progressively limited to the meaning of “paint” only, this one connected with βαθύς, “deep” (cf. Jn 4:11; Lk 24:1; Acts 20:9; Rv 2:24).

⁴⁷ See Jn 13:26; Lk 16:24 (ἵνα βάψη); Rv 19:13. Also Mk 14:20 and Mt 26:23, verb ἐμβάπτω (ὁ ἐμβαπτόμενος / ὁ ἐμβάψας).

⁴⁸ See parallels Mt 15:20; 23:25-26: there this vocabulary is absent.

II. The Acts of the Apostles

A meaningful key point in the second book by Luke is the confession of Peter in front of centurion Cornelius, at Caesarea:

You know what happened all over Judaea, how Jesus of Nazareth began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism (μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐκήρυξεν Ἰωάννης). God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil (ὃς διήλθεν εὐεργετῶν καὶ ἰώμενος πάντας τοὺς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου) (Acts 10:37-38).

Baptism comes to be the key point of Jesus' mission and of the testimony to it that the disciples must give. This appears to be the main feature of the book of Acts, found since the moment in which Peter appeals to the community of Jerusalem to choose Judas' substitute:

from the time when John was baptising (ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου) until the day when he was taken up from us, one must be appointed to serve with us as a witness to his resurrection.

We can therefore assume that baptism in this book is set as the borderline between the time of Christ and the time of the Church: "John baptised with water but, not many days from now, you are going to be baptised with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:5).⁴⁹

The book of Acts follows the path of the Gospels tradition. Baptism in the Holy Spirit, operating in the Twelve on the 50th day after Easter, is in fact operating in order to let the bystanders in the holy city turn to Peter: "What are we to do, brothers?" (Acts 2:37). Here, Peter's answer looks significant:

'You must repent,' Peter answered, 'and every one of you must be baptised (βαπτισθήτω) in the name of Jesus Christ (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ),⁵⁰ for the forgiveness of your sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν), and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

These words are strictly connected to the mandate we find in Lk 24,47: "in his name (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ), repentance for the forgiveness of sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) would be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem".⁵¹ Prep-

⁴⁹ See Acts 11:16; 13:24; 19:4; Lk 3:16; 7:19; 13:35; 19:38; Jn 1:15: "This is the one of whom I said: He who comes after me has passed ahead of me because he existed before me".

⁵⁰ See Acts 2:21- the only time this expression is used referring to baptism; see E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, p. 215 n. 3.

⁵¹ See E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, p. 199; Acts 4:12: "for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved".

osition ἐπὶ (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) might be a variant for the following preposition εἰς (εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν).⁵²

baptism is, essentially, the determining factor in order for the Holy Spirit to be given. Acceptance of this key element is conveyed by the threefold synoptic tradition since its first appearance in Mark's Gospel together with the unheard-of message of Christ's solidarity with a sinful humanity.⁵³

Chapter 8, after the narration of the "bitter persecution started against the church in Jerusalem" which followed Stephen's execution, tells that "everyone except the Apostles scattered to the country districts of Judaea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). The dispersion causes a centrifugal movement of the community:

When the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised (βεβαπτισμένοι) in the name of the Lord Jesus (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ). Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

Further we read⁵⁴ that baptism in the name of the Lord Christ (a proper, water-using baptism) precedes the gift of the Spirit. Anyway, the Pentecost event shows the disciples receiving the Spirit: according to the author of the Acts, it is their true baptism: "John baptised with water but, not many days from now, you are going to be baptised with the Holy Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι βαπτισθήσεσθε ἁγίῳ)" (Acts 1:5). The gift of the Spirit is somehow perceivable in Simon's longing to get it by purchasing it through money: he is the one who "had for some time been practising magic arts" (Acts 8:9).⁵⁵

Still in Chapter 8 we find Philip, one of the seven who are chosen to daily care (ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ)⁵⁶ of those who come to faith in Christ from the Greek-speaking world. Philip proclaims the Gospel "along the road that leads from Jerusalem down to Gaza, the desert road" to an Ethiopian, "a eunuch and an officer at the court of the kandake, or queen, of Ethiopia; he was her chief treasurer".⁵⁷ In Acts we are told that Philip, after having explained the fourth song of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah⁵⁸ to an officer of the Ethiopian queen,

⁵² See 8:16 (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ) and 19:5 (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ). As a consequence of Peter's words, Acts records that "they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number" (Acts 2:41).

⁵³ Cf. Gal 3:22: "scripture makes no exception when it says that sin is master everywhere (συνέκλεισεν ἡ γραφή τὰ πάντα ὑπὸ ἁμαρτίαν); so the promise can be given only by faith in Jesus Christ to those who have this faith".

⁵⁴ Acts 19:5: "When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus".

⁵⁵ Acts 8,9; cf. Acts 8:18-19.

⁵⁶ Acts 6:5.1.

⁵⁷ See Acts 8:26-27.

⁵⁸ We refer to Is 53:7-8.

Starting, therefore, with this text of scripture Philip proceeded to explain the good news of Jesus to him. Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is some water; is there anything to prevent my being baptised?’ (τί κολύει με βαπτισθῆναι)?” (Acts 8:35-36).

So it happened, given that Philip:

ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and he baptised him. But after they had come up out of the water again Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, and the eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:38-39).⁵⁹

We may suggest that Philip was speaking of baptism. This done, the Spirit gets Philip out of sight: “Philip appeared in Azotus and continued his journey, proclaiming the good news in every town as far as Caesarea”.⁶⁰

Following the thread of the narrative of the Acts, it is meaningful that two out of three narrations about the call of Paul⁶¹ refer precisely to baptism. In the first one,⁶² the Holy Spirit is connected to the Apostle recovering his lost sight.

“[Ananias] entered the house, and laid his hands on Saul and said, ‘Brother Saul, I have been sent by the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ It was as though scales fell away from his eyes and immediately he was able to see again. So he got up and was baptised (ἀναστὰς ἐβαπτίσθη)” (Acts 9:18).

In the second account,⁶³ the apology before the governor Felix, Paul reports Ananias’ words. Baptism is the sign of the shift from his previous condition to the upcoming one. The emphasis is laid on the medium aorist imperative βάπτισαι: the action is done to and for Paul:

“The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Upright One and hear his own voice speaking, because you are to be his witness before all humanity, testifying to what you have seen and heard. And now why delay? Hurry and be baptised (ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι) and wash away (ἀπόλουσαι) your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:14-16).

The same abovementioned city of Caesarea appears again in chapter 10. Here we can see how the effects of the mission and its expansion, started after

⁵⁹ Cf. E. Ferguson, *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, p. 204.

⁶⁰ Cf. Acts 8:40.

⁶¹ Acts 9:1-29; 22:3-21; cf. 26:9-20.

⁶² Acts 9:1-29.

⁶³ Acts 22:3-21.

⁶⁴ Acts 24:10-21.

Stephen's martyrdom,⁶⁵ are apparently fully developing only with dispersion of Christians in Antiochia, as described in the following chapter.⁶⁶ The main character is centurion Cornelius of Caesarea Marittima, who was "devout and God-fearing (εὐσεβῆς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν)",⁶⁷ follower of the practices of Judaic religion ("he gave generously to Jewish causes and prayed constantly to God").⁶⁸

Peter goes to Caesarea bringing along men who stand in Judaic belief, who find it difficult to accept the news of getting together with pagan people,⁶⁹ and are astonished by the descent of the Spirit on the latter ones (like it had happened to the Judaeans on Pentecost).⁷⁰ The word of the Apostle opens up Christian reality to those who "respect God and practice justice":⁷¹ it is the faith in Christ (and in Him only),⁷² that gives access to salvation and "redemption from sins". This *kerigma* relies upon the reality of post-resurrectional mission, and on the human life of Christ, from his being baptized by John to his death:

"You know what happened all over Judaea, how Jesus of Nazareth began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil (διήλθεν εὐεργετῶν καὶ ἰώμενος πάντας τοὺς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου) (Acts 10:37-38).

The Spirit himself goes further, beyond Peter's project:

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on gentiles too, since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God (ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν

⁶⁵ Cf. Acts 8:1-4.

⁶⁶ Cf. Acts 11:19-21: "Those who had scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, but they proclaimed the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, who came from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch where they started preaching also to the Greeks, proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus to them".

⁶⁷ Acts 10:2; cf. 10:7.22.35. To "respect of God" opposes δεισιδαιμονία in Acts 17:22.

⁶⁸ Precisely during prayer time at "ninth hour" he has a vision: he is ordered to look for Paul in Jaffa, in leather tanner Simon's house. While the latter is praying, he gets a revelation in his turn, asking him to overgo any religious or cultural food distinction, as a prelude to the acceptance of the God who "has no favourites" (Acts 10:34). Cf. Acts 10:4.31; see Lv 11; cf. P. Sacchi, *Storia del secondo tempio. Israele tra VI secolo a.C. e I secolo d.C.*, SEI, Torino 1994: pp. 415-453.

⁶⁹ See Acts 10:28.

⁷⁰ Acts 2:7.

⁷¹ Acts 10:34-36: "Then Peter addressed them, 'I now really understand', he said, 'that God has no favourites (οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήμπτης ὁ θεός), but that anybody of any nationality who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ – he is the Lord of all'"; cf. Rm 2:11.

⁷² See Acts 10:43.

θεόν). Peter himself then said, ‘Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ He then gave orders for them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ βαπτισθῆναι) (Acts 10:44-48).

Here baptism by water is distinguished by the outpouring of the Spirit, which effectively anticipates it. It is interesting to notice that the reference to the baptism of this group (“all the listeners”) is explained by the note of the location in which it takes place: the house (οἶκον) of Cornelius,⁷³ where Peter had been sent.

Nevertheless οἶκος has a wider meaning: from “house” it comes to denote “lineage”, that is, by and large, “family”.⁷⁴ So, the same happens to Lidia’s family (οἶκος) (Acts 16:15); the same as to the family of the prison keeper in Philippi (were Paul and Barnabas had been kept), who “was baptised then and there with all his household (οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες)” (Acts 16:33). Moreover, in Corinth “Crispus, president of the synagogue, and his whole household (οἶκῳ), all became believers in the Lord. Many Corinthians when they heard this became believers and were baptised” (Acts 18:8).⁷⁵

Significantly, remembering the promise made by Jesus to the disciples on the fortieth day since His Resurrection,⁷⁶ Peter shall tell to the Church of Jerusalem:

I remembered that the Lord had said, “John baptised with water (ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι), but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit (βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ).” I realised then that God was giving them the identical gift he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; and who was I to stand in God’s way? (Acts 11:16-17).

we move to Paul’s speech in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. There, he sums up the history of salvation speaking of

“Jesus, whose coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance (βάπτισμα μετανοίας) for the whole people of Israel. Before John ended his course he said, “I am not the one you imagine me to be; there is someone coming after me whose sandal I am not fit to undo.” (Acts 13:24-25).

The recall of baptism is accompanied by the *logion* on undoing the sandal, typical for the threefold tradition, as happens in the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁷ In Luke and Matthew, we also find a variant of no small importance: “he will baptise you with

⁷³ Acts 10:22.

⁷⁴ Cf. P. Weigand, οἶκος, in H. Balz–G. Schneider (eds.), *Dizionario Esetico del Nuovo Testamento*, II, Paideia, Brescia 1998, pp. 566-573.

⁷⁵ Cf. Acts 11:14 (σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκός σου); 16:31 (σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου). Paul, for his part, adds: “I did baptise the family (οἶκον) of Stephanas” (1 Co 1:16).

⁷⁶ Cf. Acts 1,5.

⁷⁷ Jn 1:26-27: “I baptise with water; but standing among you – unknown to you – is the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandal.”; cf. Mk 1:7; Acts 13,24-25.

the Holy Spirit and fire”.⁷⁸ It can be argued that the phrase recalls the same Pentecost; however, after having completed the baptism in Spirit, Jesus will also be the centre of the baptism with fire, that is judgement over people.⁷⁹

The next reference occurs in the narration of Apollo⁸⁰ coming to Ephesus before Paul. Aquila and Priscilla take care of his education. Apollo had just moved to Corinth, when

“Paul made his way overland as far as Ephesus, where he found a number of disciples. When he asked, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?’ they answered, ‘No, we were never even told there was such a thing as a Holy Spirit.’ He asked, ‘Then how were you baptised?’ They replied, ‘With John’s baptism.’ Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance (ἐβάπτισεν βάπτισμα μετανοίας); but he insisted that the people should believe in the one who was to come after him – namely Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ), and the moment Paul had laid hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy (ἦλθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ’ αὐτούς, ἐλάλουν τε γλώσσαις καὶ ἐπροφήτευον). There were about twelve of these men in all” (Acts 19:1-7).

Together with the knowledge of John’s baptism only, Apollo and Paul’s disciples in Ephesus also share the ignorance about the existence of the Holy Spirit. Paul baptises his disciples in the name of the Lord Christ, and immediately after that the Spirit lays himself upon them.⁸¹ This is the only case in which, after having received John’s baptism, complete and real baptism takes place.

III. Towards a conclusion

Embracing both John’s and Jesus’ baptism, baptism finds its place in the dynamic of the gift of the Spirit, which gains in intensity in the path upon which the three synoptic Gospels run, and is discussed at two main points in the Acts.

It is Mark above all who shockingly includes in his narrative Jesus’ sharing of the human sinful condition. Thus, the baptism presents itself as the sign of a new economy of salvation; at the same time, it indicates the starting point of the disciples’ testimony, called by virtue of the post-Easter mission to make disciples of

⁷⁸ Lk 3:16-17; Mt 3:11-12. See Mk 9:49; Mt 13:40.

⁷⁹ Cf. J1, 3:1-5; see P. Weigand, οἶκος, in H. Balz – G. Schneider (edd.), *Dizionario Esetico del Nuovo Testamento*, II, Paideia, Brescia 1998, pp. 118-119.

⁸⁰ Apollo was “an eloquent man, with a sound knowledge of the scriptures, and yet, though he had been given instruction in the Way of the Lord and preached with great spiritual fervour and was accurate in all the details he taught about Jesus, he had experienced only the baptism of John” (Acts 18:24-25).

⁸¹ See Acts 8:14-17: “When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit”.

all the distant nations, foreign to Israel, and anoint every man with the baptismal seal “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”, but also “in the name of Jesus Christ” “for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved” (Acts 4,12).

The Trinitarian element which accompanies the baptism as explicitly reported by Matthew, as well as the connection between Jesus and the Spirit in the Acts, can hardly be excluded from the intention of the Lord Jesus inferred from the Gospel narrative.

The same disciples, called to share the baptism of the cross of the Lord, shall witness with their lives to it, and shall teach every man the way of the cross as a sign of communion with the Lord of all.

So, baptism represents the beginning of a path shared by the newly established community of Christ’s disciples, not just a mere membership mark. Moreover, as underlined by the Acts, the substantial equivalence between the baptism and the gift of the Spirit runs far beyond the disciples’ ability to witness to baptism, and beyond the believers’ ability to ask for it and accept it.

A new theological reading of Pauline letters preceding (and, in the case of pseudepigraphic letters, following) the three synoptic Gospels and the Acts will enable us to give baptism a further meaning.

Summary

The baptism of Jesus and John, presented in the synoptic Gospels, shows it as an event full of the dynamics of the Spirit. It takes place according to the assumptions of each Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In the Gospel of Mark Jesus shares with humanity the same nature that has been subjected to sin. Baptism becomes the beginning of a new saving economy in which it is necessary to bear witness. The essential element of this testimony is the cross which all His disciples have to share with the Lord. The community on the one hand then needs baptism as a way to go out, and on the other, it is strengthened by the gift of the Spirit that leads to the testimony.

Keywords

baptism, synoptic Gospels, Saint Mark, Acts of the Apostles, testimony, gift

Słowa kluczowe

chrzest, ewangelie synoptyczne, św. Marek, Dzieje Apostolskie, świadectwo, dar

Bibliography

- Barth G., *Il battesimo in epoca protocristiana*, Brescia 1987.
- Bauer W., Danker F.W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago 2001.
- Boïsmard M.-É., *Le baptême chrétien selon le Nouveau Testament*, Paris 2001.
- Chantraine P., *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, Paris 2009.
- Ferguson E., *Il battesimo nella Chiesa antica*, t. I, Brescia 2014.
- Hartmann L., “Baptism”, in: D. N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York – London – Toronto – Sydney – Auckland 1992, pp. 383-394.
- Kaswalder P.A., *Galilea terra della luce. Descrizione geografica, storica e archeologica di Galilea e Golan*, Milano 2012;
- Légasse S., *Alle origini del battesimo: fondamenti biblici del rito cristiano*, Cinisello Balsamo 1994.
- Liddel H., Scott R., Jones H.S., *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1968.1973.
- Merendino R.P., *Testi anticotestamentari in Mk 1:2-8*, “Riv Bibl It” 35 (1987) 3-25.
- Metzger B., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart 2012.
- Nida E.A., Louw J.P., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, United Bible Societies 1999.
- Quesnel M., *Baptisés dans l'Esprit: Baptême et Esprit dans les Actes des Apôtres*, Paris 1985.
- Rocci L., *Vocabolario Greco-Italiano 2011*, Roma 2011.
- Sacchi P., *Storia del secondo tempio. Israele tra VI secolo a.C. e I secolo d.C.*, Torino 1994.
- Tavardon P., *Les métamorphoses de l'esprit: une exégèse du logion des deux baptêmes, Mt 3: 10-12 et parallèles*, Paris 2002.
- Vigne D., *Christ au Jourdain: le baptême de Jésus dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne*, Paris 1992.
- Weigand P., οἶκος, in: H. Balz – G. Schneider (edd.), *Dizionario Esetico del Nuovo Testamento*, vol. II, Brescia 1998.