

# **Women in Luke's Gospel**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Writing for a Jewish synagogue community in the Roman east, Luke uses his gospel narrative to address the theological, social and political questions facing his community.

Luke's narrative is set within the gendered social and cultural framework of first century Mediterranean society. Women are written into the narrative. They tell of a God who acts outside the recognised institution of Temple to announce the salvation Israel has been anticipating. Women are recipients of God's favour, widows are given a prophetic voice within the Lucan narrative. Women come to Jesus in faith. They are healed and forgiven. Women are disciples and full members of the new community of faith. They are partners with Jesus in mission and witnesses to the crucifixion, empty tomb, the angelic announcement of the resurrection and resurrection appearance. They are commissioned by Jesus as witnesses and are to receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

The stories of women are critical as they present a narrative that confronts the symbolic universe of Temple and temple system, purity and exclusivity, to reveal a God who becomes present with the outsider and creates community with those who come in faith to Jesus. Luke creates two competing symbolic conceptions of reality - the Temple and the household. Through the narrative he affirms the symbolic reality of household as the place of God's presence and reveals the Temple and temple system as failing to recognise Jesus as the prophet from God.

New symbols of presence create new means of belonging and new patterns of religious, social and economic life for the Lucan community. In contrast to the temple system of purity and exclusivity, Jesus, the prophet from God, now sets the boundaries of the new community - those of inclusivity, faith and forgiveness. Individuals, women and men, who recognise Jesus to be the prophetic word of God, who come in faith and are healed and forgiven, become the new community, the household of faith. The new community adopts the social and economic relationships of household, marked by relationships of reciprocity, mutuality and trust.

For first century readers, who are struggling to interpret their relationship with God following the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, Luke's gospel narrative provides assurance and legitimation that those who have chosen the path of Christianity are the true Israel.



## **PREFACE**

This thesis aims to explore Luke's theology of God's disclosure and human response from the presentation of women in the Lucan narrative. The stories of women, read within their narrative context, both embrace the symbolic world of the first century Judaism but also stand over against it. They present a narrative in which Luke creates new symbols of God's presence and new patterns of human response. Through this Luke articulates a theology of God's disclosure and human response to address the particular issues facing the Lucan community in the late first century.

The thesis is written in two Parts with a Conclusion. Background issues are addressed in Part One. Chapter 1 addresses issues regarding the narrative - approaches to reading Luke, author, date, sources and redactional issues, purpose, and audience. Historical perspectives are explored in Chapter 2 and cultural perspectives in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 reviews the roles and place of Hellenistic, Roman and Jewish women of the period. Part Two forms the main argument and focuses on the presentation of women in the narrative. The five chapters in this Part, Chapters 5 to 9, relate to women in the birth narratives, widows, women who were presented as sick or sinners, to women as disciples and as members of the new community of faith and to women and the cross. The Conclusion summarises the position and role given to women in the Lucan narrative and the ways in which these stories transmit Luke's theology of God's disclosure and human response. A final word is given to articulating gospel hermeneutics for the Lucan community.

This thesis has been in the writing for many years, alongside a demanding full-time job. I acknowledge the contribution of supervisors along the way - Philip Esler, John Squires and Garry Trompf. To family, friends and colleagues who have given encouragement and support, I express my thanks and appreciation.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNTSS</i>	<i>Journal for Study of the New Testament – Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSR</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Religion</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>RelSRv</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>SNTSMS</i>	<i>Society for New Testament Studies Mongraph Series</i>
<i>TToday</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift fur die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>AJ</i>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae, Josephus</i>
<i>Con Ap II</i>	<i>Against Apion, Josephus</i>
<i>Leg. Spec</i>	<i>On the Special Laws ( De Specialibus Legibus), Philo</i>
<i>Mor</i>	<i>Moralia, Plutarch</i>
<i>Virt</i>	<i>On the Virtues (De Virtutibus), Philo</i>
<i>Wars</i>	<i>The Wars of the Jews, Josephus</i>

## **PART ONE      BACKGROUND ISSUES**

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While it is commonly acknowledged that the two volume work of Luke's gospel and The Acts of the Apostles form the Lucan narrative only the gospel of Luke will be addressed in this thesis. The Acts of the Apostles does not come within the compass of this thesis.

Part One of this thesis will focus on the background issues that contribute to the uniqueness of the gospel narrative. It will give particular attention to the social, cultural and historical setting of the gospel narrative, to the place of women in the first century Mediterranean world. Issues relating to the composition of the gospel as narrative - its sources, authorship, redactional issues, audience and purpose - will be addressed in Chapter 1. The history of the Jewish people as it has contributed to their formation and their understanding of God in the first century will be outlined in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 draws on the work of social scientists and cultural anthropologists to present three models that give insight into the cultural and social assumptions of the gospel setting. Chapter 4 explores gender expectations with reference to Hellenistic, Roman and Jewish women.

Part Two of this thesis, *Women in the Story*, draws on the assumptions and issues of Chapters 1 to 5 to explore the presentation of women in the Lucan narrative. The Conclusion summarises the presentation of women in the narrative, highlighting the way in which their role and position in the narrative contributes to an understanding

of Luke's theology of God's disclosure and human response. The final section of the Conclusion articulates a gospel hermeneutic for the Lucan community.

## **CHAPTER 1: LUKE'S GOSPEL NARRATIVE**

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In this thesis I am concerned essentially with the theological intent of the evangelist and the impact of the gospel for the original readers. To this end a redaction critical approach is used which focuses on the text in its final form and the role and intent of the evangelist as author. This is in distinction from a form critical approach where the focus is on the pieces of traditional material and their original historical context. Sources are addressed only as an aid to understanding the finished text. There is no attempt to trace sources to their original historical situation or even to earlier forms of tradition.

Luke has written a narrative. The author expressly sets out to write 'an orderly account' (Luke 1:1-4). Luke's gospel tells a story - the story of God's disclosure and human response. In the light of this, a composition critical approach will be used, recognising the literary work of Luke's gospel, but consciously relating text and context.<sup>1</sup> 'The text operates with an implicit knowledge about its own period which the interpreter must re-activate in order to be able to give an adequately informed

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<sup>1</sup> See C Clifton Black 'Rhetorical Criticism' in *Hearing the New Testament Strategies for Interpretation* ed. Joel B Green (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995) 256-277. In discussing the relationship between rhetorical criticism and historical criticism Black claims that, while some expressions of rhetorical criticism are impossible to harmonise within a historical framework, rhetorical and historical inquiries are at root co-operative and not contesting. Most forms of rhetorical and historical criticism presuppose a shared model of

interpretation.<sup>2</sup> This is in distinction from a narrative critical approach or discourse analysis that focuses on the world of the text freed from its original historical situation.

Berger claims that there is a dialectical relationship between religion and society.<sup>3</sup> Luke's gospel narrative both embraces and critiques the social and religious context of the day. The social and political issues facing Luke's community have shaped his theology and have given the context in which the gospel narrative was written. The use of the social sciences provides a means of analysing the social and cultural context of the gospel narrative and of understanding more clearly the theology portrayed through the Lucan narrative.

In summary this thesis adopts a socio-redaction/composition critical approach.<sup>4</sup> The main body of the thesis, Part Two, analyses the Lucan narrative from the presentation of women in the narrative. As such it is not a feminist reading.<sup>5</sup>

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communication that attempts to triangulate (1) the intent of the author, (2) in the formulation of the text and (3) that informs the reader.

<sup>2</sup> Turid Karlsen Seim *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke & Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994) 6. See also David L Tiede *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 13-18 for discussion of literary reading of Luke's gospel within a reconstructed historical setting.

<sup>3</sup> Peter L Berger *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective* (New York: Doubleday, 1967) 41-48.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Francis Esler *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: the Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 2-6 for discussion of socio-redaction methodology. See Seim *Double Message* 7 for discussion of composition critical approach.

<sup>5</sup> See Sandra M Schneiders 'Feminist Hermeneutics' in *Hearing the New Testament Strategies for Interpretation* ed. Joel B Green (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995) 349-369. While it may be argued that one cannot approach the text from an open position it

Irrespective of my own position, my starting-point for this work is not one of suspicion, but of reading from the presentation of women in the narrative, the narrative in its own historical and cultural setting and allowing that dialogue to speak.

### **Author**

The uniqueness of the gospel under consideration is determined both by the sources that have contributed to its composition and by the purpose, style and context of its author. Although the gospel is attributed to 'Luke' there is no clear-cut conclusion as to whether Luke was the actual author of the third gospel.<sup>6</sup> While the text of the third gospel does not mention Luke, the New Testament scripture makes three references to Luke, a companion of Paul.<sup>7</sup> Records from the end of the late second century and

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can equally be argued that only after the text has been explored from within its own historical and cultural setting can the subjective ideological questions be posed. It is to this task of reading the gospel within its own social and historical setting that this thesis is committed.

<sup>6</sup> The text of the third gospel gives no indication of authorship. Joseph Fitzmyer *The Gospel According to Luke* (Anchor Bible 28, 28A; New York: Doubleday, 1981) 33 claims that the gospel is anonymous but John Nolland *Luke* (Word Biblical Commentary 35A, 35B, 35C; Waco, Texas: Word, 1989, 1993) xxxiv disputes this. Nolland claims that the presence of a dedicatory preface (Luke 1:1-4) indicates that the author was known and, therefore, the gospel cannot be considered anonymous. He also notes that from the gospel itself we are told that the author was not an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus (Luke 1:2). Fitzmyer *Luke* 33 claims the gospel indicates that the author was not a native of Palestine as his geography and knowledge of customs was inadequate. Rather, the author was an educated person, a writer who was familiar with Old Testament literary traditions and Hellenistic literary techniques, who showed a desire to relate the story of Jesus not only to his own contemporary world but also to the growth and development of the Christian church.

<sup>7</sup> The New Testament refers to Luke three times. On these occasions Luke is shown to be a companion of Paul. In Philemon 1:24 Luke appears as one of Paul's fellow workers. In Colossians 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends greetings and in 2 Timothy 4:11 Luke is said to be Paul's sole companion. Tradition has used these texts to strengthen the gospel link

early third century tradition have attributed the authorship of the third gospel to Luke.<sup>8</sup> However, recently some scholars have rejected the tradition that identifies Luke, the companion of Paul, as the author of the third gospel. The questions surrounding the debate on authorship still stand but, for the purpose of this thesis, the author will be referred to as 'Luke' and the question of authorship will be set aside. The concern of this thesis is with the theological intent of the author rather than a precise identification of the actual author of the third gospel.

### **Date**

There are also varying opinions as to the date of the gospel. According to Marshall,<sup>9</sup> the dating of the gospel of Luke is closely bound up with the dating of Mark and Acts and there are two serious possibilities: either a date in the early sixties or in the later decades of the first century. The most commonly accepted view is that Luke was composed after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE and before the end of the first century. This thesis argues for a gospel composition in the mid-late eighties or early nineties of the first century CE.

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to Paul, an apostle, and so to strengthen the recognition of this text as Scripture and Canon. Furthermore, the identification of Luke as author has found support from the 'we' passages in Acts. See Acts 16:10-17. Acts 20:5-15. Acts 21:1-18. Acts 27:1-28:16.

<sup>8</sup> Nolland *Luke* xxxv. Fitzmyer *Luke* 36. Tradition has ascribed the third gospel to Luke. The earliest attributions are found towards the end of the second and beginning of the third centuries.

<sup>9</sup> I Howard Marshall *The Gospel According to Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978) 34.

A number of commentators, on the basis of the final chronology of Acts, have argued for a date in the early sixties.<sup>10</sup> However, this position fails to take account of the role of the literary work of Acts, the schematisation in Luke's editorial process, and the importance of Paul's unhindered preaching in Rome as Luke's ending for his narrative. Additionally, there are compelling reasons for dating Luke's gospel after 70 CE, the fall of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Temple. Luke's gospel refers to 'many' other previous accounts of Jesus, one of which was the text of Mark.<sup>11</sup> It would, therefore, be difficult for Luke to predate Mark's gospel. Furthermore, there is indication that Luke has also developed some of the passages in Mark to reflect what he knew of the Roman siege of Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

CH Dodd and, more recently, John Nolland have challenged the dating of the gospel after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> CH Dodd has questioned the claim that the two

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<sup>10</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 54 dates Luke around 62 CE. He claims that as the story of Acts comes to its conclusion with the arrest of Paul in Rome, Luke was written prior to the death of Paul.

<sup>11</sup> See next section for discussion of Luke's sources. Mark's gospel, set within the conflict of the Roman-Jewish war and dated between 65 CE-70 CE, provides the narrative framework for large sections of Luke's gospel.

<sup>12</sup> In two critical passages, Luke 19:33-34 and 21:20-23, Luke has deliberately presented a picture that refers to the actual military siege of Jerusalem and destruction of that city by the Romans. Luke has changed the Marcan allusion to Daniel (Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11), about the destruction of the Temple, to give a description of the battle and capture of the city of Jerusalem. Jesus' announcement in Mark 13:14-20 about the abomination of desolation now, in Luke 21:20-24 becomes a saying about Jerusalem being surrounded by camps. Luke has added verses in Luke 19:43-44 that further build the picture of the sack of Jerusalem by Titus. Luke has also strengthened the emphasis on the destruction of Jerusalem with a series of references to it in Luke 13:32-35; 19:41-44; 21:5-6; 20-24; 23:27-31.

<sup>13</sup> Marshall *Luke* 35: 'the complete lack of interest in the fall of Jerusalem in Acts and the way in which the book ends its story before the death of Paul are strong indications of a date

significant passages (Luke 19:43-44 and 21:20-24) were written after the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> Esler has argued against this position to endorse a post-70 CE date for composition.<sup>15</sup> More recently, however, Nolland has raised again the possibility that Luke's gospel could have been written prior to 70 CE. He acknowledges the critical nature of the two passages Luke 19:41-44 and 21:20-24, but claims that hindsight is not the only possible motivation for the Lucan changes.<sup>16</sup> Again it is difficult to find his argument persuasive. Nolland has raised the option of prophetic prediction.

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before AD 70'. While Marshall does not necessarily argue for a date prior to 70 CE he allows for the possibility.

<sup>14</sup> See Fitzmyer *Luke* 54. Esler *Community* 27. CH Dodd 'The Fall of Jerusalem and the Abomination of Desolation' *JSR* 37 (1947) 47-54 regards the two passages, Luke 19:43-44 and 21:20-24, as composed entirely from the language of the Old Testament. Dodd has argued that the military operations outlined by Luke were the regular generalised pictures of warfare. To the extent that any historical event has coloured Luke's presentation, he claims it was not Titus' capture of Jerusalem in 70 CE, but Nebuchadnezzar's capture in 587 BCE.

<sup>15</sup> Esler *Community* 27-28 argues against Dodd's position. Firstly he claims that it is erroneous to suggest that the Lucan description of the sack of Jerusalem was like any such military operation in the ancient world. Secondly, he argues that 'little significance can be attached to Luke's use of Septuagintal language' as this is typical of Luke's style. Esler's third argument in favour of a post-70 CE date relates to Luke's introduction of the concept of the age of Gentiles. Luke has changed the Marcan apocalypse and introduced the notion that the age of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24) must take place 'after the sack of Jerusalem and before the return of the Son of Man'. This indicates that Luke 'does not regard the sacking of Jerusalem as an apocalyptic event' in itself. As this attitude would not have been credible before 70 CE a post-70 CE date for the composition of Luke is necessary.

<sup>16</sup> Nolland *Luke* xxxvii-xxxix questions whether these changes could be prophetic prediction rather than explanation after the event. Further, he claims there are questions to be raised by the change in emphasis from Mark's interest in destruction of the Temple to Luke's record of destruction of the city. Nolland argues that 'the move from Temple to city is part of a complex orchestration' that anticipates God's judgement on 'the Jewish nation for its failure to respond appropriately to the ministry of Jesus'. 'This anticipation', he claims, 'implied no criticism of the temple loyalty of the Jewish faith'. According to Nolland, 'the Temple has a very positive

However, while this is possible, it is unlikely that this is what is happening in this text. He has also claimed a position for the Jerusalem Temple that is difficult to maintain. It is acknowledged that the Temple does hold an important and significant role in the gospel of Luke. However, the assumption that the above changes (Luke 19:43-44 and 21:20) have been made to emphasise and retain the central and positive role of the Temple as opposed to Jerusalem the city, miss the critical role of the Temple in Luke's account. Esler has argued for an ambiguity in Luke's attitude to the Temple.<sup>17</sup> This thesis will argue a critical and symbolic role for the Temple in Luke's gospel; but it does not support the above unambiguous, positive position required by Nolland's argument. The dating of Luke must be placed after 70 CE.<sup>18</sup>

If 70 CE is the earliest date of composition, the question is raised as to what is the latest possible date of composition. Some writers have ascribed a second century date to Luke's gospel.<sup>19</sup> However, the fact that Luke gives no evidence that he was aware of the Pauline corpus strongly indicates a much earlier date prior to 95 CE.<sup>20</sup> This dating is supported by the attitude to Roman authorities, as it is envisaged in Luke's gospel, that those taken before a Roman court could expect a fair trial. This was not

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function' in Luke's gospel and Luke's focus on Jerusalem the city rather than the Jerusalem Temple allows Luke to present the positive temple loyalty less ambiguously.

<sup>17</sup> Esler *Community* 131-163.

<sup>18</sup> See also Robert C Tannehill *Luke: Abingdon New Testament Commentaries* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) 26. Tiede *Prophecy* 1-7. Against this see JAT Robinson *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 86-117.

<sup>19</sup> See Fitzmyer *Luke* 57.

<sup>20</sup> Esler *Community* 28 argues that Luke shows no evidence of being aware of Paul's letters, 'some of which appear to have been available in collected form before 95 CE'. This, however, is a debatable point as it is not known whether Luke did actually have access to Paul's letters, published or unpublished.

the case after 110 CE and probably not for some time before then.<sup>21</sup> This places Luke's gospel after 70 CE and before 95 CE. A date in the mid-late eighties or early nineties allows time to have elapsed since the destruction of Jerusalem and the development of a non-apocalyptic attitude to that event. Esler also argues that there are signs that Luke's community had encountered opposition from Jewish authorities and that this suggests a time after the rabbis had organised themselves at Jamnia and had begun to tighten up on Christians attending synagogues, even excluding them altogether at times.<sup>22</sup> This would give a date some time in the eighties. In conclusion the dating of the gospel must be after 70 CE and before 95 CE. A date in the mid-eighties or early nineties accommodates the development of attitude in response to the destruction of Jerusalem and the organised response of the rabbis to Christians still attending the synagogues.

## **Sources**

Luke's gospel is a carefully composed narrative in which the evangelist has drawn upon a broad range of Jewish scriptural sources and traditions. The primary sources for his gospel include the Greek text of Mark, the source, almost exclusively of sayings, referred to as Q (the abbreviation of the German word, *Quelle* 'source') and an additional source unique to the Lucan gospel, referred to as L.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Esler *Community* 29. See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 53-57. Marshall *Luke* 34-35.

<sup>22</sup> Esler *Community* 29. For further discussion regarding this period see Judith Lieu, John North and Tessa Rajek (editors) *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>23</sup> Mark Allen Powell *What are they saying about Luke?* (New York: Paulist, 1989) 16-41. Marshall *Luke* 30. Nolland *Luke* xxviii-xxxi. Fitzmyer *Luke* 63-65. Fitzmyer proposes 'a modified form of the two document hypothesis'. Mark and Q [the abbreviation of the German word, *Quelle* 'source'] are the two documents. The two document hypothesis dates from the early nineteenth century and 'maintains the priority of the Greek text of Mark over both

The Greek text of Mark provides the framework for much of Luke's gospel. For the larger part of the gospel, the sequence of episodes in Luke's gospel follows closely that of Mark's text as shown by the following table.<sup>24</sup>

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>
Mark 1:1-15	Luke 3:1-4:15
Mark 1:21-3:19	Luke 4:31-6:19
	<b>Luke's little interpolation 6:20-8:3</b>
Mark 4:1-9:40 With omissions	Luke 8:4-9:50
Mark 6:45-8:26	<i>Luke's big omission</i>
Mark 9:41-10:12	<i>Luke's little omission</i>
	<b>Luke's big interpolation 9:51-18:14</b>
Mark 10:13-13:32	Luke 18:15-21:33
Mark 14:1-16:8	Luke 22:1-24:12

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Matthew and Luke'. 'It also postulates a Greek written source for about 230 verses, common to both Matthew and Luke, which contain sayings of Jesus and which are not found in Mark'. According to this hypothesis, both Luke and Matthew were composed independently. A modification of the two document hypothesis dates from the time of BH Streeter (BH Streeter *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship and Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1924)). It 'admits the use of a third source L for material peculiar to the Lucan gospel', and indeed a fourth source M for material peculiar to Matthew's gospel. While some writers call this the four document hypothesis, Fitzmyer prefers a 'modified two source theory' as this reflects initial dependence on the two document hypothesis. There is a further possibility that the additional sources, L in the case of Luke's gospel and M in the case of Matthew, may not be written but oral sources. Opposition to the modified two source theory has been raised by BH Streeter and others. The essential problem is where there have been agreements between Matthew and Luke against Mark. For full discussion see Fitzmyer *Luke* 72-73. For discussion of proto-Luke hypothesis see Fitzmyer *Luke* 89-91. Vincent Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel: A Study of the Proto-Luke Hypothesis* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926). See also Farmer [WR Farmer *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* revised edition (Dillsboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, 1976)] who was opposed to the two source theory and argued that Mark is an abridgement of Matthew and Luke.

<sup>24</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 67.

Luke has added major sections to the Marcan framework. Luke 6:20-8:3, Luke's little interpolation, and Luke 9:51-18:14, Luke's big interpolation, find no parallels in Mark's gospel. Luke has also made changes to the Marcan order in a number of places. Fitzmyer has identified seven transpositions, shown in the table below, that reflect the distinctiveness of the Lucan composition.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 71.

	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>Reason for transposition</b>
The Imprisonment of John the Baptist	Mark 6:17-18	Luke 3:19-20	To finish off the story of John before the baptism and ministry of Jesus
Jesus' visit to Nazareth	Mark 6:1-6	Luke 4:16-30 the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry	To serve a programmatic function: it presents in capsule form the theme of fulfilment and symbolises the rejection that will mark the ministry as a whole
The call of the four disciples	Mark 1:16-20	Luke 5:1-11	A scene about the role of Simon the fisherman. Acquires a more psychologically plausible position.
The choosing of the twelve and crowd that followed Jesus	Mark 3:13-19 Mark 3:7-12	Luke 6:12-16 Luke 6:17-19	Scenes are inverted by Luke and achieve a more logical setting and audience for the Sermon on the Plain
Episode about Jesus' real relatives	Mark 3: 31-35	Luke 8:19-21	Now after the parable of the sower and its interpretation, provides an illustration of the relationship between the word of God and the disciples who hear it
Jesus' foretelling of his betrayal	Mark 14:18-21	Luke 22:21-23	Becomes part of the discourse after the meal, being joined by three other sayings
The order of Jesus' interrogation before the Sanhedrin is inverted	Mark 14: 55-64a 64b-65 66-72	Luke 22: 66-71 63-65 54-62	Jesus interrogated mistreated denied by Peter  This shows Luke's concern to unite the material about Peter and to depict only one appearance of Jesus before the Sanhedrin.

In addition to Luke's use of the Marcan text, he has also used material from another source, Q. There are some 230 verses found in both Matthew and Luke that are not present in Mark. The similarity of these 230 verses found in Matthew and Luke indicates their dependence on a Greek written source other than Mark. This source is referred to as Q and represents a considerable amount of gospel tradition not found in Mark.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 75. Marshall *Luke* 30-31.

While material derived from Mark and Q accounts for almost two-thirds of Luke's gospel it does not account for all of Luke's work. Whatever is not derived from these two sources can be said to come from Luke's private source L. L can be regarded as a designation for sources, written or oral, of information about the Jesus story in the early Christian community that Luke would have tapped into in various ways. Some verses of L, which are neither Mark nor Q, would have been composed by Luke.<sup>27</sup>

Luke has used the sources from Mark, Q and L, but has reworked them to create a narrative that reflects his style and purpose. A summary of key marks of Luke's literary work, as identified by Fitzmyer, is shown below.<sup>28</sup>

i.	Luke has improved the Greek style and language of Mark or Q sayings.
ii.	Luke frequently abbreviates a Marcan story by omitting details that are not necessary for his purpose.
iii.	Certain episodes, considered by Luke to be duplicates of those he has already recounted, are omitted from the Marcan material. <sup>29</sup>
iv.	Luke deliberately omits from his source material information that does not contribute directly to his overall literary plan.
v.	Although the Lucan material follows sequentially that of Mark there are points throughout the narrative where Luke has transposed Marcan material to achieve his literary purpose. These have been highlighted above. <sup>30</sup>
vi.	Luke avoids anything that reflects the violent, the passionate or the emotional.
vii.	Luke's concern to enhance the image of Jesus also carries over to such figures as the disciples and Jesus' family.

Luke has increased the number of women in his gospel by retaining many of the women found in Mark's gospel, but also introducing 'women of his own'. The

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<sup>27</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 85. See also Marshall *Luke* 31 who does not confirm the existence of L as a source and suggests that further investigation is necessary.

<sup>28</sup> For a full summary see Fitzmyer *Luke* 93-96.

<sup>29</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 81 gives a list of the 12 doublets found in Luke's Gospel, but also a list of 9 places where Luke has omitted Marcan material because he has used something similar on a previous occasion.

<sup>30</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 71.

following table gives a summary of the women found in Luke's gospel, indicating those present in Mark and Matthew, and those unique to Luke.

	<b>Luke</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Matthew</b>
<b>Birth and Infancy Narratives</b>			
Promise of the birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1:5-25		
Annunciation to Mary	Luke 1:26-38		
Mary's visit to Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-56		
Birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1:57-80		
Birth of Jesus	Luke 2:1-7		Matt 1:18-25
Adoration of Infant	Luke 2:8-20		Matt 2:1-12
Circumcision/Presentation	Luke 2:21-38		
The boy Jesus in the Temple	Luke 2:41-52		
<b>Galilean Ministry</b>			
Elijah and the widow at Zaraphath	Luke 4:25-30		
Healing of Simon's mother-in-law	Luke 4:38-39	Mark 1:29-31	Matt 8:14-15
Widow of Nain	Luke 7:11-17		
Sinful woman	Luke 7:36-50		
Galilean women followers	Luke 8:2-3		
Jesus' family	Luke 8:19-21	Mark 3:31-35	Matt 12:46-50
Jairus' daughter and the woman with the haemorrhage	Luke 8:4-55	Mark 5:21-43	Matt 9:18-26
<b>Journey to Jerusalem</b>			
Mary and Martha	Luke 10:38-42		
Blessed is the womb that bore you	Luke 11:27-28		
Healing of the crippled woman	Luke 13:10-17		
Parable of the leaven	Luke 13:20-21		
If any one comes to me	Luke 14:25-26		
Parable of the lost coin	Luke 15:8-10		
Teaching about divorce	Luke 16:18	Mark 10:11-12	Matt 5:31-32 & 19:9
Parable of the widow	Luke 18:1-8		
Widow's mite	Luke 21:1-4	Mark 12:41-44	
<b>Passion and Resurrection</b>			
Daughters of Jerusalem	Luke 23:27-31		
Witnesses of the crucifixion	Luke 23:49	Mark 15:40-41	
Women at the grave and empty tomb	Luke 23:55-24:8	Mark 15:42-47 & 16 1-8	Matt 27:57-61 & 28:1-10

One of the features of Luke's composition is his tendency to create pairs or doublets.

This pattern of pairing or parallelism, seen at the level of words, sentences and

narrative units, serves Luke's narrative purpose.<sup>31</sup> Much of this parallel material can be classified in terms of gender, a story of a man paired with a story of a woman.<sup>32</sup> While some of these pairs are taken over from Q and others are taken from Mark, there are a number of cases in which the story about the man is the traditional one and the story about the woman is special to Luke. This can be seen, for instance, in the story about the man who had one hundred sheep, (Luke 15:1-7 and Matthew 18:10-14), which is paired with the story about the women with the ten coins (Luke 14:8-10). D'Angelo argues that Luke employs two kinds of literary pairs.<sup>33</sup> The first type of pair is where, in the one unit, there are two brief stories with an identical point or similar function. One of the stories is about a man, the other about a woman. The second type of pair consists of an architectural pair. In this construction, similar stories are told in different contexts to bind the narrative together and to demonstrate the coherence of the plan of God.

While there seems no doubt that pairing between a man and a woman is an obvious trait in Luke's work, the more fundamental issue relates to why Luke has used this particular technique and what he is able to achieve through it. Duality in Luke has often been interpreted on the basis of Israelite-Jewish regulations about witnesses

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<sup>31</sup> See CH Talbert *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974) 98ff. Robert J Karris *Luke: Artist and Theologian. Luke's Passion Account as Literature* (New York: Paulist, 1985) 112.

<sup>32</sup> Seim *Double Message* 12. Jane Kopas 'Jesus and Women: Luke's Gospel', *TToday* 43 (1986) 192. CF Parvey 'The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament' in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* ed RR Reuther (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) 139ff. Robert C Tannehill *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: the Gospel according to Luke Vol 1* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 133. Ben Witherington III *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 128-129.

and has been seen as the formal expression in the composition of reliability of tradition and message.<sup>34</sup> Gender-pairs have been seen as an expression of the universalism of Luke, demonstrating inclusiveness and equality between women and men.<sup>35</sup> They have also been regarded as the means of communicating with both women and men, assuming women and men play a role alongside each other.<sup>36</sup> However, while gender-pairs in Luke may have the function of doing all of the above, these reasons alone do not satisfy their inclusion so prominently in the Lucan narrative. While gender-pairs are found repeatedly through the gospel they demonstrate no regular repeated pattern or set groupings that would denote a merely stylistic mode of expression. Rather, they can be seen to show a generalised pattern of pairing, an expression of the way things are in society. Seim has undertaken an overview of gender-pairs in Luke-Acts from a literary perspective. In this she shows that through the use of gender-pairs Luke demonstrates a gender-determined complementarity rather than the more regulatory reason that all must be attested twice to gain credibility.<sup>37</sup> This pattern writes women into the narrative world of Luke. Women become visible members of the community. On the other hand women retain their identity as women, members of the group of women.

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<sup>33</sup> Mary Rose D'Angelo 'Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View' *JBL* 109 (1990) 443-447.

<sup>34</sup> Karris *Luke* 112.

<sup>35</sup> See Karris *Luke* 113. CH Talbert *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1986) 92. Kopas *Jesus and Women* 192. Tannehill *Narrative Unity* 132ff. Seim *Double Message* 13.

<sup>36</sup> Parvey 'Theology and Leadership' 139ff. Kopas 'Jesus and Women' 192. Tannehill *Narrative Unity* 132ff.

<sup>37</sup> Seim *Double Message* 14-24 concludes that Luke has created one coherent narrative that integrates the stories of men and women. Through the narrative he has drawn together the new community of both men and women. 'At the same time he conveys the picture of a world divided by gender' where men and women in the same community have their primary sense of belonging within a group of women or of men.

Rather than men as visible and women as present but invisible, the normative expression of community in Luke's narrative now includes women and men as visible partners.

### **Luke's Audience**

There have been many questions regarding the community for whom Luke was writing. Some scholars have argued that Luke is writing for a Gentile audience, others Godfearers, while still others claim he is writing to Christians from a Jewish background. Similarly, there are questions as to the nature of the community for whom Luke is writing. Opinion varies as to whether Luke is writing for a specific community, a group of communities or an 'open market'. These issues will be addressed in the following material where it is argued that Luke wrote for a specific Christian community from a socially diverse Jewish synagogue background, in a Hellenised social environment.<sup>38</sup>

The gospel is addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3), a person who, apart from the reference in Acts 1:1, is otherwise not known. Since the time of Origen, the name Theophilus has often been interpreted symbolically, to indicate that the gospel was addressed to someone 'beloved of God' or 'loving God'. This may or may not have been the case. On the other hand Theophilus could have been the real recipient of the

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<sup>38</sup> See Fitzmyer *Luke 57–59* for summary of position that Luke was written for a Gentile Christian audience in predominantly Gentile setting. Against a Christian community see Tyson 'Jews' 19-38 and Nolland *Luke xxxii-xxxiii* who argue that Luke was primarily written to Godfearers. GW Trompf *Early Christian Historiography: Narratives of Retributive Justice* Cassell Religious Studies (London: Cassell, 2000). 106, 116, argues that the conceived readership was 'mixed' (Jews/Christians/Godfearers and proselytes/Gentiles).

document addressed under a synonym,<sup>39</sup> or he could have been an official of some sort.<sup>40</sup>

Irrespective of who Theophilus was or what his relationship to the intended readers might have been, the church has long understood the gospel of Luke to be addressed to Gentile Christians. Nolland states 'The usual and indeed the longstanding traditional assumption is that Luke was a Gentile who wrote his Gospel for a Gentile church of the late first century.'<sup>41</sup> This understanding is echoed by Fitzmyer who writes, 'It is widely held today that Luke has written his Gospel for a Gentile Christian audience, or at least one that was predominantly Gentile Christian.'<sup>42</sup> There is, however, a growing number of dissenting voices to this common assumption. Jacob Jervell claims that Luke was written for a Jewish Christian audience.<sup>43</sup> David Tiede draws on the early work of Jervell to argue that Luke was writing to those who had been, or still were, members of the synagogue.<sup>44</sup> Nolland and Tyson both claim that Luke was writing not for Jewish Christians, but for Godfearers.<sup>45</sup> Tannehill and

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<sup>39</sup> Nolland *Luke* xxxiii.

<sup>40</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 300.

<sup>41</sup> Nolland *Luke* xxxii.

<sup>42</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 57.

<sup>43</sup> See Jacob Jervell *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) who challenged this position. Jervell claims that Luke writes for Jewish-Christians that are under fire from Jewish neighbours because of Paul's controversies.

<sup>44</sup> Tiede *Prophecy 7* places Luke-Acts in the midst of Jewish tradition. He claims it reflects an intra-family struggle and debate between the many strains of Jewish tradition in the Hellenistic era, in the light of the destruction of the Temple, as to who is the faithful Israel.

<sup>45</sup> Nolland *Luke* xxxii-xxxiii. Luke's arguments made assumptions of his readers that could only be true for people whose values had been shaped by first century Judaism. A Godfearer was the ideal reader for Luke's gospel. Luke was engaged in responding apologetically to Jewish polemic against the Christian movement. Godfearers would have experienced the

Esler claim that Luke was written for Christians, Jews and Godfearers, who were from a synagogue background.<sup>46</sup>

This thesis argues that Luke wrote for a specific Christian community from a socially diverse Jewish synagogue background, in a Hellenised social environment.<sup>47</sup> Luke's gospel follows Greek literary and historiographic conventions. Its style and its use of sources, such as the Greek version of the Jewish scriptures and the acknowledgement of political and religious figures, is further evidence of the Hellenistic environment in which the gospel was written.<sup>48</sup> The gospel itself suggests that Luke was writing for a Christian audience that was familiar with first century Judaism and with Jesus' proclamation of the gospel. Luke has used scripture in such a way that his audience

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ambiguity of their situation in Judaism: welcomed but still an outsider in Judaism. Luke's Godfearer stands at the crossroads. Joseph B Tyson 'Jews and Judaism in Luke-Acts: Reading as a Godfearer' *NTS* 41 (1995) 25-26 undertook a literary study of Luke-Acts in which he considered the implied readers' knowledge of locations, persons, languages, events, measurements and money, religious practices and literature. For a seven point summary of his findings see Tyson 'Jews' 24. These findings led him to the conclusion that the implied reader in the texts is similar to the Godfearers in Luke and Acts. After reviewing particular passages from Luke and Acts, Tyson comes to the conclusion that Luke-Acts may now be approached as an evangelistic text addressed to Godfearers. See Tyson 'Jews' 38.

<sup>46</sup> See Esler *Community* 31-32. Tannehill *Luke* 24-26 argues for an audience of diverse social composition, churches that included people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, social status and wealth. He claims that the kind of knowledge that Luke presupposes in its audience and the kinds of people who dominate the narrative provide evidence that both Jews and Gentiles (Godfearers) were influential in the Lukan churches.

<sup>47</sup> See Fitzmyer *Luke* 57-59 for summary of position that Luke was written for a Gentile Christian audience in a predominantly Gentile setting. Against a Christian community see Tyson 'Jews' 19-38. Nolland *Luke* xxxii-xxxiii. Both argue that Luke was primarily written to Godfearers. Also GW Trompf *Early Christian Historiography* 106, 116 who argues that Luke was written for an 'open market'.

<sup>48</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 8.

needs considerable knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. His allusions to the Greek Old Testament would have been unintelligible to someone unfamiliar with its language and contents. Similarly, Luke assumes that his readers are familiar with concepts such as 'Son of Man' and 'Kingdom of God' which are used by the Lucan Jesus without explanation.<sup>49</sup> Esler sees the use of Septuagintal expressions throughout the two books (Luke and Acts) as confirmation of the synagogue background for Luke and his audience.<sup>50</sup> Tiede claims that Luke has provided a picture of early Christianity as a denominational movement that claimed its place within the synagogue of the Hellenistic era.<sup>51</sup> Luke's descriptions of the synagogue and synagogue ritual are detailed and represent one of the most complete literary accounts of first century synagogue practice available. The synagogue in Luke's gospel forms the critical setting for Jesus' programmatic announcement of the reign of God in Luke 4:16-30. It was the reading of the scriptures in the synagogues that provided the meeting ground for discussion about the 'interpretation of the times'.<sup>52</sup>

The synagogue background of the Lucan community suggests its composition as a mixture of Gentile Godfearers and Jews. Tannehill speaks of a community of Jews and Godfearers, women and men, poor and relatively wealthy people, common people and a few members perhaps of the elite or retainer class.<sup>53</sup> Esler has argued for this composition, claiming that Luke has deliberately shaped his sources to

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<sup>49</sup> Esler *Community* 25.

<sup>50</sup> Esler *Community* 45.

<sup>51</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 9.

<sup>52</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 9.

<sup>53</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 24.

present the first Christian community as composed solely of Jews and Godfearers.<sup>54</sup>

He claims that:

‘the crucial development of the spread of the mission throughout the Diaspora is to be the establishment of Christian communities containing both Jews and Gentile Godfearers. That the two groups entered into table fellowship with each other profoundly shocked orthodox Jewish sensibilities.’<sup>55</sup>

Luke was writing to a particular Christian community, probably his local congregation. His concern to respond to the wider social, political and religious issues of the day in the context of the local community is shown in Luke 12:32 when he refers to the Christian congregation as the ‘little flock’. However, not all scholars share this position. While Esler claims that Luke’s gospel was written for a particular Christian community and Tiede’s argument would imply this view, others argue that Luke’s gospel is written for a group of churches, a number of different communities or for an ‘open market’.<sup>56</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson argues that, ‘given the length, complexity and literary sophistication of his work, it is likely that Luke intentionally addressed a more general readership’.<sup>57</sup> Irrespective of whether Luke’s work was addressed to a particular community, a group of churches or a wider general readership, his narrative has been developed for a Christian community containing both Jews and Gentile Godfearers who were struggling with their response to the social, political and religious situation of the late first century.

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<sup>54</sup> Esler *Community* 43.

<sup>55</sup> Esler *Community* 39.

<sup>56</sup> See Esler *Community* 26. Tannehill *Luke* 26. Trompf *Early Christian Historiography* 106.

<sup>57</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson *The Gospel of Luke* Vol 3, Sacra Pagina Series (Minnesota: Liturgical, 1991) 3. According to Johnson, Luke is not interested in resolving a local dispute, but of

## **Purpose of the Gospel**

As discussed above, Luke provides a formal beginning for his gospel with a distinctively literary prologue, a Greek-style preface.<sup>58</sup> This prologue identifies the work as an orderly account, written by the author (Luke) to Theophilus.<sup>59</sup> Luke is not an eyewitness but relies on previous accounts and records.<sup>60</sup> He aims to arrange the various accounts in proper order, to compile a narrative of the affairs that have taken place in our own time - 'the events that have been fulfilled among us'. Luke places himself in the company of eyewitnesses and servants of the Word who had passed the tradition on to him and he consciously and carefully determines a sequential account of events that is addressed to Theophilus. The purpose of this account is stated in Luke 1:4 'so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been informed.' Luke's purpose has to do with discernment of the truth. He is not so much concerned with Theophilus knowing what had taken place, but being able to interpret the truth about God conveyed through these events. Assurance for Theophilus is found in him knowing, being assured, 'these events lead to this interpretation.'<sup>61</sup>

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addressing the crisis 'of the very nature and historical development of the Christian movement itself'.

<sup>58</sup> Joel B Green *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997) 34. Fitzmyer *Luke* 288ff.

<sup>59</sup> How much Theophilus knows is unclear. He may be a relative outsider to the Christian faith, a Godfearer, a new Christian or one who is reasonably well versed. See Green *Luke* 45. Fitzmyer *Luke* 299-300.

<sup>60</sup> Green *Luke* 37 sees this as Luke placing his project in their company whereas Fitzmyer *Luke* 291 suggests that Luke is going beyond the attempts of his predecessors.

It is widely accepted that Luke had a broader purpose in his gospel than merely instruction for one Theophilus. The prologue serves as a rhetorical device to introduce the gospel as a whole. Luke's gospel is the narrative of God's disclosure and human response. The narrative itself contains its own implicit theology that has been carefully arranged within a literary framework to create a story that resonates with the history and theology it conveys.<sup>62</sup> In the complex world of anguish of the late first century Mediterranean society, Luke's gospel narrative provides a theological interpretation of the historical and social situation that offers solace and legitimation to the Lucan community of the late first century. Those who have made the choice to break from the synogogue and maintain their Christian faith are given the assurance that this decision is in line with the plan of God.

Scholars differ, however, in their understanding of the purpose of Luke's gospel. These differences reflect, in large part, the different perceptions of who comprises Luke's audience. On the whole, most scholars address the key issues of the Jewishness of Christianity, the Hellenisation of Christianity and the inclusion of Gentiles in the purpose and mission of God. Hans Conzelmann believes that Luke is particularly concerned with issues of eschatology, and Charles Talbert that Luke is addressing false teaching in the church. Both these issues have received little or no attention in later works. Hans Conzelmann claims that Jesus and the early church were expecting the Parousia within their own generation. When this did not come about the church was faced with a theological crisis. For Conzelmann, the purpose of Luke's gospel was to address this crisis. Luke accomplished this through the

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<sup>61</sup> Green *Luke* 45. See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 300 who translates v4 'so that your Excellency may realise what assurance you have for the instruction you have received.'

<sup>62</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 13. Fitzmyer *Luke* 91.

development of a scheme of salvation history that removed the expectation of an early Parousia by claiming a divinely determined 'age of the church'.<sup>63</sup> Talbert argues that the major purpose of Luke-Acts was to provide a defence against false teaching in the church, particularly teachings and ideas associated with Gnosticism.<sup>64</sup> Tiede assumes Luke is writing for a community of Jewish Christians. The purpose of the Lucan narrative is 'to interpret the discontinuities that face the Jewish sectarian movement which seeks to extend its mission in the face of rejection and persecution by both Jews and Greeks.'<sup>65</sup> For Tiede, Luke addresses the paradox of suffering, seeing it as a result of both faithfulness and of sin. Maddox, who wrote a book focused on Luke's intentions, believes that Luke wrote primarily for Gentile Christians.<sup>66</sup> His purpose was to respond to the challenge from the Jewish community to the legitimacy of Gentile Christianity. In responding to the question 'Who are the true people of God?' Luke's purpose is apologetic, to demonstrate the essential continuity between Christianity and Jewish hope and at the same time to offer an explanation as to why the hope is not fulfilled in Israel. Luke's answer suggests that, as it is the Jews who have rejected the Christian message they, not the Christians, are the heretics and apostates. Further, addressing the question of Jew-Gentile relationships is the work of Sanders and Jervell. Sanders claims that Luke's purpose is not merely apologetic, i.e. to explain the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, but that it is quite polemical. Sanders claims that in Luke's writings all Jews are opposed to the will of God. Jews must reject their own tradition and accept

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<sup>63</sup> Hans Conzelmann *The Theology of St Luke* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1960).

<sup>64</sup> CH Talbert *Luke and the Gnostics. An Examination of the Lucan Purpose* (Nashville: Abington, 1966).

<sup>65</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 15-16.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Maddox *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982).

Christianity as a Jewish religion.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, Jervell claims that Luke links the Gentile mission to the Jews' acceptance of Christianity rather than to their rejection of it. For the Scriptures have foretold that when Israel is restored then even the Gentiles will repent. For Jervell the essential division is not between Jews and Gentiles but between Jews who have accepted the Gospel and those who have rejected it.<sup>68</sup> Esler speaks of the purpose of Luke's narrative as that of legitimization. Esler claims that Luke wrote in a community that comprised mainly Jews and Gentiles (including Romans) who had been associated with the synagogues before becoming Christians. Some in the community were rich and some were poor, but they all needed strong assurance that their decision to convert to Christianity and to adopt a different lifestyle had been the correct one.<sup>69</sup> Squires, arguing that the theme of the plan of God is central to Luke's two volume work, claims that Luke shares in the task of Jewish apologetic. The purpose of Luke's gospel is to reinterpret 'the received tradition concerning Jesus in such a way as to provide certainty for his Christian readers in the wider Hellenistic context'.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Jack T Sanders *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

<sup>68</sup> Jervell *People of God*.

<sup>69</sup> Esler *Community* 16-23.

<sup>70</sup> John T Squires *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts SNTSMS 76* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 53. Cf. Hans Conzelmann *Gentiles, Jews, Christians: Polemics and Apologetics in the Greco-Roman Era* translated by M Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

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In his book *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* Tiede has warned against reading the gospel of Luke without reference to its particular historical, cultural or religious setting.<sup>71</sup> Further, Tiede's book provides a helpful insight into the issues facing the Jewish people towards the end of the first century. He argues that this was a period of intense struggle for the Jewish nation. The revolt against Rome and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE marked a key point in Jewish history and raised the critical issue of God's faithfulness to God's people. The destruction of the Temple also led to changes in Judaism as it moved from a temple-centred sectarian movement to a more united Judaism focused around local synagogues and administered by the school of sages at Jamnia. Luke's gospel was written in this period, after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. The Christian synagogue community in which and for whom Luke wrote was, according to Esler, located in a city of the Roman Empire where Hellenistic culture was strong or even dominant.<sup>72</sup> Although the story of Luke's narrative is located in Palestine, in the period before the destruction of the Temple, many of the critical issues of this later period are addressed. According to Tiede, generations of interpreters, who have no awareness of Israel in its late first century agonies of defeat, dishonour and dissension, have read in Luke-Acts the triumph of

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<sup>71</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 13-18.

<sup>72</sup> See Esler *Community* 30. See also footnote 36. Esler believes that Antioch-on-the-Orontes was the place of composition of Luke-Acts.

the church justified by God at the expense of the Jews and at the expense of historical credibility.<sup>73</sup>

Not only does Luke's narrative require an understanding of the issues facing Jews at the end of the first century, it also assumes a knowledge of the Jewish people's history and their relationship to the scriptures. Although the Jewish people perceived themselves to be a chosen nation, a holy people, whose life and worship honoured God, they had faced a turbulent history for the 800 years before the coming of Jesus. In 587 BCE the people of Judah suffered invasion, exile and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Babylonians.<sup>74</sup> After three deportations to Babylon, few but the poorest remained in Palestine. Most of the Jewish people were to live in exile outside their homeland and away from the Temple. This time in exile saw the rise of synagogue worship among faithful Jews in Babylon. Some of the most devout and best-educated Jews who had taken the scriptures with them gave leadership to the exiled Jewish community. Their worship of God was now reformed around the scriptures and teaching, in place of the Jerusalem Temple (cf. Ezekiel). The study of the law took the place of animal sacrifices and ethical observances took the place of ritual.<sup>75</sup> It is against this historical background that Luke interprets and articulates God's presence in the person of Jesus Christ. In Luke's gospel the story of Jesus Christ is both the fulfilment of Jewish history and the assurance of God's presence for the Christian community of the late first century.

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<sup>73</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 15.

<sup>74</sup> Flavius Josephus *The Works of Josephus* translated by William Whiston (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987) AJ10.8.

<sup>75</sup> Merrill C Tenney *New Testament Survey, Revised* (Grand Rapids: WmB Eerdmans, 1985) 21.

The issues facing the Jewish people at the end of the first century were to a large extent the consequence of their history, their understanding and experience of God. Critical issues relating to the place and presence of God following the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the place of scripture in relationship to Jesus and the growing diversity of community through Hellenisation are all issues of history. The exile gave birth to the Jewish Diaspora, and resulted in the dual focus of Jewish life, the Temple and the scriptures. When Cyrus, King of Persia, captured Babylon in 539 BCE, he reversed the policies of the Assyrians (cf. 2 Kings 17) and Babylonians (cf. 2 Kings 24-25) and encouraged the Jewish people to return to their homeland. Many Jews chose to remain as exiles, however, and small Jewish communities were established throughout the Mediterranean world from Babylon to Rome.<sup>76</sup> The exiles who did return to Palestine faced the challenge of finding their place among those who had not been taken captive. They needed to rebuild their life in their own land. The first group of exiles who returned to Palestine under Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the priest, engaged in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. This was completed in 515 BCE (cf. Ezra 1-6).<sup>77</sup> A second group of exiles returned under the leadership of Ezra (cf. Ezra 7-10) 'a scribe skilled in the law of Moses' (Ezra 7:6). Ezra was one of a new class of religious leaders, scholars in the sacred writings, who replaced priests as interpreters of the law.<sup>78</sup> Ezra encouraged the post-exilic community's study of the law (cf. Neh 8-10). In Palestine there were now two foci of Jewish life and authority, the Scriptures and the Temple.

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<sup>76</sup> Tenney *New Testament* 19-22, 112. Cf. Jeremiah 29. Tenney notes the development of strong and respected Jewish communities in Babylon and Egypt. See also Everett Ferguson *Backgrounds of Early Christianity: Second Edition* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1993) 376-377.

<sup>77</sup> Josephus *AJ* 11.1-4.

Growing Hellenisation led both to conflict between the culture of the world power and the culture of the Jewish people, and to new opportunities as the way for migration and movement of people was opened up. In 332 BCE-323 BCE King Alexander of Macedon conquered the Persian Empire and lands from Asia Minor and Egypt to the borders of India. New boundaries were forged, and a new cultural, political and social landscape opened the way for Hellenisation of the whole region.<sup>79</sup> This impacted on the future of Judaism both in Palestine and in the Diaspora communities. In Palestine, the struggle with Hellenisation and foreign rule led eventually to armed revolt and the formation of the Hasmonaean dynasty to maintain the Jewish faith. On the other hand Hellenisation provided new opportunities for movement and migration and the Diaspora communities grew in number and size. In Palestine the Jewish people initially enjoyed a relatively peaceful time during which Hellenistic culture grew and thrived. Following Alexander's death, the Jewish people lived under the rule of the Ptolemies in Egypt from c300 BCE-c200 BCE.<sup>80</sup> Some, mainly the upper class, were tempted to assimilate and adopt

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<sup>78</sup> See Ferguson *Backgrounds* 377.

<sup>79</sup> Alexander, who became Alexander the Great, brought under his control a large and complex kingdom. Although he died too soon to work out a satisfactory administrative scheme for his immense kingdom two of his policies had a profound impact on the history of the region. The first of his policies was the foundation of Greek cities at strategic points, to serve as administrative centres and to provide a focus and beacon of Greek culture. The second policy was openness and tolerance to the native cultures. This resulted in Greek culture exercising a much wider influence on and being influenced by the cultures of the East.

<sup>80</sup> Following Alexander's death three generals had emerged in control of three kingdoms, Antigonus in Macedonia, Ptolemy in Egypt and Seleucus in Syria. The Jewish people initially lived under Ptolemy in Egypt.

Greek ways.<sup>81</sup> Others, mainly the older priestly families and the peasants of the countryside, resisted the attempt and increased their emphasis on the traditional defining marks of Judaism embodied in the books of the Torah.<sup>82</sup> It was during this period that the original Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek.<sup>83</sup> The period of relative peace came to an end in 200 BCE when Antiochus III the Great took Palestine from Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria became the rulers of the Jewish people. Conditions for Jews did not improve.<sup>84</sup> Between 175 BCE and 163 BCE the Hellenisers opposed and undermined the traditional Jewish institutions.<sup>85</sup> They, with the support of Antiochus IV (who had succeeded his brother Seleucus), established a Greek style polis in Jerusalem. In 167 BCE Antiochus tore down the city walls of Jerusalem and built a new fortress for the Syrian garrison, established a cult to the

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<sup>81</sup> Hellenisation in the economic and social spheres is depicted in the Josephus story of Joseph, son of Tobiah, who secured (in place of the High Priest) the right of collecting taxes for the Ptolemies and of being the representative of the Jewish people. See Josephus *AJ* 12.4.1-5.

<sup>82</sup> Alternatively the resistance to Hellenism and the continuation of traditional ideals in Palestine can be seen in the Apocryphal writings. See *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach* where the Prologue states that this book was translated 'for those living abroad who wished to gain learning, being prepared in character to live according to the law'. The teachings were originally written in Hebrew towards the end of the Ptolemaic rule in Palestine. The translation to Greek was carried out about 118 BCE, in Egypt.

<sup>83</sup> This was of significance as it was the first translation of the Jewish scriptures into another language. More importantly, it commanded a translation of Hebrew ideas into the Greek language which was symbolic of the way in which Hellenisation was impacting on Jewish faith and life.

<sup>84</sup> From 190 BCE the Seleucids were in financial difficulties, having to pay heavy tribute to Rome. In Palestine, there was rivalry between two of the leading Jewish families, with the house of Onias continuing to support the Ptolemies in Egypt and the house of Tobias supporting the Seleucids. Jewish Hellenisers more openly promoted their cultural and political objectives and there was growing conflict between Hellenisers, the ruling Syrians and the Jewish priesthood.

<sup>85</sup> See 1 Macc 1:10-15. 2 Macc 4:10-17.

Greek goddess Zeus in the Temple itself, and issued a decree prohibiting the practice of Jewish religion in Judea.<sup>86</sup> This provoked a revolt from Jewish people. Those from the rural areas along with the traditionalists from Jerusalem became a Jewish resistance movement and responded with armed revolt. The Maccabean wars were to last for a period of 20 years.<sup>87</sup> These wars came to an end when the Jewish nation was granted full independence in 142 BCE.<sup>88</sup> The Hasmonaean dynasty was established and Simon was made High Priest.<sup>89</sup> This provided a political means for the Jews to oppose the growing Hellenisation. However, although the Hasmonaean dynasty provided a welcome alternative for the Jewish people in its early years, its later leaders embraced Hellenism which, along with internal family conflict, eventually led to the downfall of the Hasmonaean dynasty and the occupation of Palestine by Rome.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Josephus *AJ* 12.5.1-4. 1 Macc 1:20-60. See also John E Stambaugh and David L Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 21. Ferguson *Backgrounds* 381-383.

<sup>87</sup> In 164 BCE Judas Maccabeus overturned the cult of Zeus, which had come to be known as the 'abomination of desolation', and re-established the cult of the Jews, an event celebrated in the holiday of Hannukah. In 163 BCE the Maccabean wars began and continued for a period of some 20 years between the Seleucids and the Maccabees. For an account of Jewish revolt against the Seleucids see 1 and 2 Maccabees. See also Josephus *AJ* 12.7.7. Tenney *New Testament Survey* 28. Ferguson *Background* 384-385.

<sup>88</sup> Simon, the last surviving brother of the five Maccabean brothers, supported the cause of the Seleucid king against his rival Trypo and in return the Jewish nation was granted independence.

<sup>89</sup> See 1 Macc 14:41-43.

<sup>90</sup> Following the death of Simon, John Hyrcannus, his son, was appointed High Priest. He embarked on an aggressive policy of military expansion. Captured populations were forced to accept Judaism or leave the land. Josephus writes that the Pharisees, one of the sects of the Jews, were both 'powerful over the multitude, and jealous of Hyrcannus'. (Josephus *AJ* 13.10.5-6). Hyrcannus was to realign with the Saducees who were the dominant party in the Sanhedrin. Josephus speaks most highly of John Hyrcannus (Josephus *AJ* 13.10.7). John

The growth of Hellenistic culture supported the formation of Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean world as people could travel between kingdoms in a way that had been impossible before the conquests of Alexander the Great. Many Jews took advantage of the opportunities of migration and established new homes in the growing Hellenistic cities. While some of the Diaspora Jews lost their identity and became one with the Greek Hellenistic culture, most remained Jews, retaining their monotheistic faith and maintaining their contact with the Temple through pilgrimages to annual feasts, and payment of the temple tax. They observed the Sabbath and maintained synagogue services.<sup>91</sup>

In 63 BCE Palestine came under Roman rule.<sup>92</sup> The Jewish people were once again to face the conflict of living under foreign rule. Social unrest and periods of tension continued for the next 100 years until the Jewish uprising in 67 CE where they suffered the loss of the Temple and the ruin of Jerusalem. The Hasmonaean dynasty was brought to an end in 37 BCE when Antipater's son, Herod the Great, was

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Hyrannus' son, Aristobulus, succeeded him and was the first of his family to take the title 'king'. This was an indication of the increasing acceptance of Hellenisation of the dynasty that had come into being to oppose it (Josephus *AJ* 13.11.1). On his death he was succeeded by his older brother, Alexander Jannaeus, who acquired a poor reputation, was at odds with the people and was opposed by the Pharisees (Josephus *AJ* 13.15.5). Jannaeus ruled with the title 'king' for the period 103 BCE-76 BCE, but when he died a dispute arose over succession and this precipitated a civil war. The resultant instability invited the Romans to intervene.

<sup>91</sup> Tenney *New Testament Survey* 112.

<sup>92</sup> The Roman General Pompey captured Jerusalem and Judea and Idumea were added to the Roman province of Syria. Although Hyrcanus II was confirmed as High Priest, his rule, without the title king, was reduced in size and power. Antipater, the governor of Idumea, held the balance of power.

appointed King.<sup>93</sup> After Herod's death Judea, Samaria and Idumea were placed under Roman governors.<sup>94</sup> The Roman governors lived on the coast at Caesarea and went to Jerusalem for feast days. There was a strong military presence in Jerusalem at all times and the Romans initially showed respect for Jewish religious concerns.<sup>95</sup> However, some of the former's practices became increasingly irritating to orthodox Jews. Pontius Pilate (26 CE-36 CE) was the first Roman governor to seriously antagonise the Jewish people.<sup>96</sup> Herod Agrippa I followed Pontius Pilate. He was outwardly supportive of the Jews but continued to promote Rome and the participation in pagan ceremonies.<sup>97</sup> According to Josephus (*AJ* 19.9-20.11) the later governors became steadily worse. Tensions began to grow. Jewish resentment against Roman rule led to social and political unrest amongst the Jewish nationalists.<sup>98</sup> The Romans reacted and executed terrorists, and arrested crowds

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<sup>93</sup> Josephus *AJ* 15.6.1-7.10. There was considerable Jewish resistance to Herod's kingship. Although he invested in the building of a new Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews considered Herod an outsider who treated them with contempt. Pharisees were tortured as they tried to resist Herod's Hellenising activities. (See Josephus *AJ* 15.7.1-3.)

<sup>94</sup> Following Herod's death in 4 BCE Palestine had been divided between his three sons, forming three native tetrarchies. One of the tetrarchies covering Judea, Samaria and Idumea, was subsequently transferred to Roman administration. See also Luke 3:1.

<sup>95</sup> The official policy of the Romans both maintained Jewish autonomy in religious matters and permitted Jews all over the world to pay the annual temple tax. Jews were exempt from the normal requirement to participate in the imperial cult. Instead, sacrifices were offered every day in the Temple on behalf of the Emperor.

<sup>96</sup> Josephus *AJ* 18.3.1. *Wars* 2.9.2-3. *AJ* 18.3.2. *Wars* 3.9.4. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 38.299-305. Josephus *AJ* 18.4.1-2. See also Ferguson *Backgrounds* 393-394.

<sup>97</sup> Josephus *AJ* 19.8.2. See also Acts 12 for account in favour of the Jews where he beheaded James the son of Zebedee and arrested Peter.

<sup>98</sup> Roman control tightened. The Zealot movement increased its efficiency, threatening with death any Jew who collaborated with the Roman authorities. The religious and political authorities of the Sanhedrin exploited the unrest for their own ends, persecuting dissidents like the Christians. Charismatic leaders appeared in many parts and hopes of a speedy

coming to hear the preaching of the prophets.<sup>99</sup> In 66 CE the growing unrest and progressive breakdown of society led to a full-scale revolt against the Romans.<sup>100</sup> The Roman Empire responded by sending Vespasian and his son Titus to put down the revolt.<sup>101</sup> By 68 CE the Roman armies had gained control of the whole area except eastern Judea.<sup>102</sup> After a full year of seige, Titus attacked the Temple Mount in 70 CE.<sup>103</sup> The last to fall was Masada in 73 CE, or possibly 74 CE, where defenders chose to suicide rather than surrender.<sup>104</sup> Following the war, Judea was made a full province. The post of governor was upgraded and the military garrison was strengthened. The Sanhedrin was dissolved and, with the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish nation was without its symbolic and central point of unity and identity.

The organisation and worship of Jewry was profoundly affected. Johanan ben Zakkai took the lead in the reorganisation of Jewish life following the destruction of the Temple. He established the rabbinical academy at Jamnia which became the

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deliverance from Roman domination were increased by the prophetic sermons predicting that the Jews would gain victory under a Messiah who would soon come. See Josephus *AJ* 20.5.1 (Theudas). *AJ* 18.1.1. *Wars* 2.8.1 (Judas the Galilean). *AJ* 20.8.6. *Wars* 2.13.5. (Egyptian).

<sup>99</sup> Stambaugh *New Testament* 28.

<sup>100</sup> The Zealots seized the fortress at Masada massacring the Roman garrison and the priestly establishment in Jerusalem discontinued paying sacrifices on behalf of the Emperor. See also Josephus *Wars* 2.17.2-3, 2.22.1-2.

<sup>101</sup> See Josephus *Wars* 3.

<sup>102</sup> The death of the Roman Emperor, Nero, interrupted the Roman campaign. Vespasian emerged victorious as the new Emperor and returned to Rome and his son Titus continued the campaign in Jerusalem.

<sup>103</sup> Titus entered the Holy of Holies, took the holy implements and on the ninth day of the fifth month (August 5), the anniversary of the destruction of the first Temple by the Babylonians, set fire to the Temple itself. After a month the walls of the city were destroyed, as was the enclosure of the Temple. See Josephus *Wars* 5 and 6.

<sup>104</sup> Josephus *Wars* 7.8.1-7.

administrative seat of Jewish life. It also received official authorisation from Rome as representing the Jewish people. During this period Judaism changed from a temple-centred organisation comprising a diversity of sects to a more united Judaism formed around synagogues.

For the Lucan community, a Christian community from a Jewish background, in a Hellenised city in the Roman east, this history gave both encouragement and concern. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple raised questions of God's role and presence, and precipitated questions of faith and identity. The Temple had been both institutionally and symbolically at the centre of the Jewish nation. It was the place that symbolised the presence of God and gave order and meaning to the pattern of Jewish society. With the destruction of the Temple the key symbol holding and legitimating Israel had been destroyed. Furthermore, in the Jewish world there was a general understanding that obedience to God brought prosperity and failure to listen and obey God's prophets brought destruction.<sup>105</sup> 'Israel's fortunes could be correlated directly to its obedience to God and that Israel's sufferings be viewed as the result of failure to listen to the words of the prophets.'<sup>106</sup> Josephus writes of this notion of God's providence in the Preface to *Antiquitates Judaicae*:

'the main lesson to be learnt from this history, by any who are to peruse it, is that men who conform to the will of God, and who do not venture to transgress laws that have been excellently laid down, prosper in all things beyond belief, and for their reward are offered by God felicity; whereas, in proportion as they depart from the strict

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<sup>105</sup> See Jeremiah, Isaiah esp Jeremiah 29:19.

<sup>106</sup> Tiede *Prophecy* 5.

observance of these laws, things practicable become impracticable, and whatever imaginary good thing they strive to do ends in irretrievable disasters.’<sup>107</sup>

The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple shattered the Jewish understanding of the world. ‘It was firmly believed that the Temple was destined to exist eternally, just like heaven and earth. With the destruction of the Temple the image of the universe was rendered defective, the established framework of the nation was undermined.’<sup>108</sup> The Jewish understanding of God’s providence in the light of the destruction of the Temple raised the question of whether God had deserted God’s people because of their sin and disobedience and, if this was so, then what was the sin that had caused God’s wrath. In the light of the destruction of the Temple was Israel’s faith in vain? Hellenisation impacted on Jewish religious practices and, in the Diaspora communities particularly, on the composition of the synagogue congregations. Those attending the synagogue were no longer only from a Jewish background. Gentiles and Godfearers were all part of the community. In the light of the changing political landscape and the loss of the Temple the question of boundaries and purity were key issues. Who were clean and who were unclean? Who were the faithful Israel?<sup>109</sup> In times of exile when the Jews had lost their Temple they had turned to the scriptures and reformed their life patterns around these sacred writings. The scriptures guarded the identity of the people. They offered a common ground for disparate Jewish groups. Following the destruction of the Temple there was a growing number of diverse Jewish, and now Jewish Christian groups, who were seeking to interpret

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<sup>107</sup> Josephus *AJ* Preface 3.14.

<sup>108</sup> Ched Myers *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (New York: Orbis, 1988) 79.

<sup>109</sup> Tiede *Prophecy 7. Esler Community* 43-45.

their own times on the basis of their scriptural heritage.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, at the time when both Jews and Christians were claiming the Scriptures as their heritage, the relationship between Jesus and the Scriptures became critical. Luke's narrative is written in the light of these issues. Through the gospel story Luke speaks to the concerns of Christians at this time.

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<sup>110</sup> Tiede *Prophecy 5* claims that the common ground of scripture provided a critical point of departure for those who stood within the scriptural tradition.

### CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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The Lucan gospel story is located in Jewish Palestine in the period of Roman occupation before the downfall of the Jerusalem Temple. It is set in the midst of Jewish custom, culture and people. To read Luke is to step into a culture that is foreign to the twentieth century Western world: it is Eastern and it is situated some 2000 years ago. Robbins writes that 'culture is a humanly constructed arena of artistic, literary, historical, and aesthetic competencies'.<sup>111</sup> Berger also claims that culture is a humanly constructed world. He argues that, as a direct consequence of 'man's' biological constitution, 'man' must ongoingly establish relationship with the world. 'Man' is born into a world that predates him but, unlike the world of animals, 'man's' world is open and unstable. 'Man' must fashion a world by his own activity. It is through this process of world building that 'man' creates stability for himself.<sup>112</sup> Culture provides firm structures for human life that are lacking biologically.<sup>113</sup> Society is one aspect of culture.<sup>114</sup> It is 'that aspect of non-material culture that structures man's ongoing relationships with his fellowmen'.<sup>115</sup> Esler writes that these

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<sup>111</sup> Vernon K Robbins 'The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 323.

<sup>112</sup> Peter L Berger *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1967) 5-6.

<sup>113</sup> As culture is continuously produced by human beings, it is also inherently unstable.

<sup>114</sup> Berger *Sacred Canopy* 4 alerts us to the dialectic nature of society. Society is a dialectic consisting of three processes: externalisation, objectivation and internalisation. The objective character of society is experienced as it confronts human beings, exerting social control.

<sup>115</sup> Berger *Sacred Canopy* 7.

social factors have been highly significant in shaping Lucan theology.<sup>116</sup> In the light of this understanding there is a double imperative to look more closely at the social world of the gospel. Firstly, through an understanding of the social world we visit the narrative in the context in which it was set. Secondly, if, as Esler claims, Lucan theology is formed in response to the social pressures experienced by the community, then Lucan theology becomes more accessible as we understand the culture through which it is conveyed. The remainder of this chapter will look in more detail at the contribution of the social sciences to biblical interpretation and specifically at three models that enable us to appreciate the social world of Luke's gospel.

The use of the social sciences in interpreting New Testament texts has developed rapidly over the last 20 years.<sup>117</sup> Whereas history is concerned with the specific, particular, atypical situation, the social sciences are concerned with the usual, recurring, typical features of a community as the basis for understanding the social setting. Sociology is the discipline of the social sciences that in essence examines the recurrent and typical aspects of social behaviour and institutions.<sup>118</sup> Esler provides a

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<sup>116</sup> Esler *Community* 2. Luke has shaped the gospel traditions in response to social and political pressures experienced by his community. Berger *Sacred Canopy* 41 claims that the relationship between religion and society is always dialectical.

<sup>117</sup> See Esler *Community* 4-5. Carolyn Osiek 'The Social Sciences and the Second Testament: Problems and Challenges' *BTB* 22 (1992) 89.

<sup>118</sup> Berger *Invitation* 12-13. Although, from the beginning, sociology has considered itself a science there has been debate about the meaning of this definition and the degree to which sociology and anthropology can be considered a science in the same way as the physical sciences such as physics and chemistry. While some sociologists have resisted this classification, there has been willingness to be bound by certain canons of procedure.

helpful introduction to issues of methodology.<sup>119</sup> Of particular importance to this thesis is the use of models.<sup>120</sup> As explained by Esler 'A model is a conceptualisation of a group of phenomena, a simplified and schematised picture of reality, which is capable of generating a set of hypotheses which, once verified, may either found or substantiate a theory'.<sup>121</sup> Or, as stated by Malina, 'Models are abstract, simplified representations of more complex real world objects and interactions'.<sup>122</sup> Their purpose is to facilitate understanding. They provide a means of testing a set of hypotheses against the real world experience it relates to. Models cannot be proved as they are abstractions, postulations. They can only be validated.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Esler *Community* 6-12. 'Three levels of research are evident in the physical sciences: description, classification and explanation'. With the exception of laws, the highest form of explanation, these three levels of research are also present in the social sciences. Description, the first level of research leads to descriptions of a wide variety of social phenomena. 'Classification, the second level of research', 'involves the grouping together of similar phenomena', thus 'reducing the infinite variety of descriptions to a certain number of categories' or 'types'. A 'typology' denotes a complete system. 'The third level of scientific research is that of explanation'. It is dependent on the first two levels of research, description and classification, and consists of demonstrating the dependence of two phenomena.

<sup>120</sup> These are used in the process of explanation.

<sup>121</sup> Esler *Community* 9.

<sup>122</sup> Bruce J Malina *The New Testament World: insights from cultural anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 17.

<sup>123</sup> Esler *Community* 9-12 In the social sciences, validation occurs through comparison. This can occur in a number of ways. Comparison may be made between two social structures or institutions that 'have as many features as possible in common and then to explain the differences'. Secondly, comparison may be made between 'social structures or institutions from widely different cultures', or 'across distinct historical periods'. Comparisons may also be made between two sets of data or between an existing typology and a case under consideration, one set of data. Finally, 'comparison of the conceptualised phenomena in a model' can be made with 'actual cases' as a mode of verification.

In the task of biblical interpretation there is a growing dependence on the use of models and theories as the categories of social organisation and social world as comprehensive world of meaning are employed. Osiek, drawing on the work of Jonathan Smith, suggests four distinct approaches to biblical interpretation: description of social facts or *realia*, social history, social organisation and social world as a comprehensive world of meaning.<sup>124</sup> The various stages of social science research can be seen in these different approaches to biblical interpretation.

The use of the social sciences in biblical interpretation, however, has not been without its critics. Esler has addressed various objections to the use of the social sciences.<sup>125</sup> Osiek, on the other hand, identifies the problems associated with the proper and valid use of social models on material quite different from that for which the models were originally intended.<sup>126</sup> She concludes her paper with two challenges facing social scientific biblical interpretation.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Osiek 'Social Sciences' 88. Jonathan Z Smith 'The Social Description of Early Christianity' *RelSRev* 1 (1975) 19-25.

<sup>125</sup> Esler *Community* 12.

<sup>126</sup> Osiek 'Social Sciences' 89-92. Osiek raises eight problems in this regard: 'the charge of reductionism'; 'understanding social science models, their strengths and limitations'; 'the validity of using synchronic models diachronically'; 'finding the right level of abstraction'; 'adapting social-science method to the different demands of biblical and other texts'; 'representing the precise social location of early Christians'; 'representing the social world of women'; 'finding a place for exceptions'. Of particular significance to this thesis is the understanding of the public-private dichotomy of first century Mediterranean society. This heightens the importance of recovering a female social world. See Chapter 4 of this thesis for further discussion.

<sup>127</sup> Osiek 'Social Sciences' 92, 93. Osiek lists 'working out an effective relationship with the various forms of political theology' and 'making the results available and of use to readers beyond the close circle of scholars' as two challenges facing social scientific biblical interpretation.

The following is an exploration of three social science models, honour/shame and gendered society, ancient social relationships, and the process of legitimation. An understanding of these models will assist in the reading of Luke's gospel.

### **Honour/Shame and Gendered Society**

Osiek writes 'we must also realise that at every social level half the population is even more silent. The public-private dichotomy of ancient Mediterranean culture virtually excluded women from public life and, therefore, from history.'<sup>128</sup> The model of honour and shame provides a framework through which this division of first century Mediterranean society can be addressed. Neyrey writes 'Cultural anthropologists argue that the ancient peoples of the eastern Mediterranean viewed all reality in terms of gender division, that is, in terms of honour and shame, especially as these apply to males and females.'<sup>129</sup> Moxnes confirms 'It is the specific relationship between an honour and shame code and male and female roles that is most commonly accepted as distinctive for the Mediterranean.'<sup>130</sup>

Honour was one of the pivotal values of the first century Mediterranean world. It is an abstract concept that is determined by a person's power, gender and precedence. It is viewed from both the male and the female perspective. Honour (and shame) was an inner quality, the value of the person in their own eyes, and the affirmation or recognition of a person's status by others. Honour was 'the person's claim to worth,

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<sup>128</sup> Osiek 'Social Sciences' 91.

<sup>129</sup> Jerome H Neyrey 'What's Wrong with this Picture? John 4, Cultural Stereotypes of Women, and Public and Private Space' *BTB* 24 (1992) 79.

<sup>130</sup> Halvor Moxnes, 'Honor and Shame' *BTB* 23 (1993) 170.

plus the social acknowledgement of that worth.’<sup>131</sup> From a symbolic point of view, honour stood for a person’s or group’s rightful place in society.

From the male perspective this cultural value of prestige is referred to as honour, from the female perspective as shame. While women maintain their exclusiveness and sensitivity (shame), men are engaged in the game of honour.<sup>132</sup> Females maintain their honour (shame) by thwarting off even the remotest advances into their symbolic space. Women not under the tutelage of a male person, such as widows and those who are divorced, are thought of as stripped of female honour - exposed and more like males than females.<sup>133</sup> Honour (for men) served as a sort of social rating which entitled a person to interact in specific ways with his equals, superiors and subordinates, according to prescribed cues in society. Challenge-riposte was a type of social interaction in which honour was contested according to socially defined rules.<sup>134</sup> Only men could play, and only with social equals. Honour, like all goods in

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<sup>131</sup> Bruce Malina and Jerome H Neyrey ‘Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World’ in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 26. Moxnes ‘Honor’ 168.

<sup>132</sup> Malina and Neyrey ‘Honor’ 42. ‘Male honour is symbolised by the testicles, which stand for manliness, courage, authority over family, willingness to defend one’s reputation and refusal to submit to humiliation. Female honour (shame), on the other hand, is symbolised by the hymen, and stands for female sexual exclusiveness, discretion, shyness, restraint, timidity and sexual exclusiveness. The male lacks the physiological basis for sexual exclusiveness’ and ‘his masculinity is in question if he does not challenge the boundaries of other men through their women’. Males, however, are responsible to look after their women – ‘mother, wife, sister - since their dishonour directly implies his own’.

<sup>133</sup> Malina and Neyrey ‘Honor’ 44.

<sup>134</sup> Malina and Neyrey ‘Honor’ 29-32.

life, was thought to exist in limited amount. The aim of the challenge-riposte contest was for one person (man) to gain the honour of another (man).<sup>135</sup>

The honour of the family or kinship group is divided into the moral, or sexual, division of labour.<sup>136</sup> This division of honour (male) and shame (female) is replicated in spatial arrangements. Female space and female things, the places where females are allowed, the things that females deal with exclusively - like kitchen utensils, drawing water, spinning and sewing, bread baking, sweeping out the house - are centripetal to the family dwelling or village of residence. They face or are drawn inwards. All things moving from the outside in, or remaining inside, are female. Alternatively, all things taken from the inside to the outside are male.

People are shamed (i.e. have neither honour nor shame) when they aspire to a certain status and this status is denied them by public opinion. Certain families and institutions such as pimps, first century tavern and inn owners, actors and prostitutes as a class are considered irretrievably shameless. They respect no lines of exclusiveness and hence symbol the chaotic.<sup>137</sup>

### **Ancient Social Relations**

An institution is commonly defined as 'a distinctive complex of social actions.'<sup>138</sup> Drawing on the work of a German social scientist Arnold Gehlen, Berger develops the notion of an institution as a regulatory agency. 'Institutions provide procedures through which human conduct is patterned, compelled to go, in grooves deemed

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<sup>135</sup> Moxnes 'Honor' 168.

<sup>136</sup> Malina and Neyrey 'Honor' 41-43.

<sup>137</sup> Malina and Neyrey 'Honor' 45-46.

desirable by society.’<sup>139</sup> According to Elliott, institutions ‘comprise social associations or processes that are highly organised and systematised in terms of roles, relationships, and responsibilities. They are stable over time.’<sup>140</sup> Institutions encompass a wide range of areas of organised social life including kinship, politics, education, religion and economics.<sup>141</sup> The following model of social relations will assist in analysing the two key institutions of first century Palestine, the Temple and the household.

Elliott draws on the work of Malina to present a comparative model of ancient social relations.<sup>142</sup> Malina argues that the forms of social relations in pre-industrial societies fall along a spectrum marked by types of reciprocity at one pole of the spectrum and types of redistribution or centrality at the other. The model of ancient social relations contrasts reciprocity and redistribution. Reciprocity is typical of small-scale societies, villages and household life. Personal back and forth exchanges of goods and services such as food, clothing, shelter, hospitality and other basic necessities of life are shared between households, kin and fictive kin.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, redistribution

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<sup>138</sup> Berger *Invitation* 87.

<sup>139</sup> Berger *Invitation* 87.

<sup>140</sup> John H Elliott ‘Temple versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions’ in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 212.

<sup>141</sup> Mark McVann ‘Rituals of Status Transformation in Luke-Acts: The Case of Jesus the Prophet’ in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 335.

<sup>142</sup> Elliott ‘Temple versus Household’ 232. See Bruce J Malina *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986) 98-111.

<sup>143</sup> When shared freely according to generosity or need (generalised reciprocity), shared symmetrically, according to the interests of both parties (balanced reciprocity) or obtained with no concern for the other’s self-interest (negative reciprocity).

is typical of large-scale societies with a central political base and central storehouse economies. Goods and services are pooled, usually in association with a Temple. They are kept under centralised control and are redistributed by the powerful elite or temple hierarchy. The following table summarises and compares the models of reciprocity and redistribution. It depicts the impact of the different models on the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and alludes to the limitations of each model.

<b>Generalised Reciprocity</b>	<b>Redistribution</b>
<b>1. Scale</b>	
Small scale village populations, urban groups	Large-scale national populations
<b>2. Political Relations</b>	
Power sharing, consensus	Centralised political, economic, social, and ideological control
Voluntary, back and forth sharing of 'gifts', food, shelter, clothing, tools etc. giving without expectation of immediate return	Coerced pooling of agricultural surplus; imposition of debts, taxes, tithes redistribution according to the interests of the elite
<b>3. Economic Relations</b>	
Diffused, local household management	Central storehouse economy with temple depot
Household control of production	Centralised control of production, distribution, consumption of resources and services
Reciprocal exchange of goods and services according to their availability and need	Redistribution of available surplus according to interests of power wielders
Balanced relations through mutual sharing of goods at common disposal	Economic and social imbalance of haves/have nots, elites and sub-elites according to the control of resources, means and relationship to production
<b>4. Social Relations</b>	
Direct face to face interaction of agents, fidelity in obligations as a matter of familial loyalty and group honour	Indirect interaction of classes through mediating agencies; maintenance of allegiance to system through socialisation and norm enforcement
Traditional domestic roles and status; honour and prestige according to exercise of generosity and commitment to traditional norms of mutual sharing	Social roles and status according to political and economic power, proximity/distance from power centre, law military
<b>5. Cultural Tradition</b>	
Cultural tradition shared through domestic networks and interest of kin and fictive kin solidarity	Centralised control of cultural tradition, ideology shaped by interests of elites and temple hierarchies
<b>6. Limitations</b>	
Reciprocal relations constrained by absence of centralised authority and group pressure	Centralisation prone to agglomeration of power and resources, totalitarianism, land expropriation

Obligations of reciprocity especially stressed in crises involving personal survival	Redistribution inadequate in times of crisis resulting in subsistence conditions, banditry, and at times revolt
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***Contrasts in reciprocity and redistribution***<sup>144</sup>

In the light of this model, the household was aligned with the life of the peasant and the countryside. It embraced the model of reciprocity. The household family was the basic unit of production in peasant society.<sup>145</sup> Reciprocity and barter between trusted family and friends was the means of economic exchange, in contrast to the economic system of redistribution associated with the Temple. The private space of house and home was the scene of hospitality, generosity, friendship, deeds of mercy, acts of mutual aid and comfort, and familial love and fraternal support, unmeasured and unlimited. These household actions formed bonds of intimacy and solidarity. This was the organisation of communal life marked by the reciprocities of kinship, friendship and domestic relations.

On the other hand, the Jerusalem Temple can be aligned with the social-economic system of redistribution.<sup>146</sup> The Jerusalem Temple was at the heart of first century Palestine's redistribution economy which was controlled by an alliance of the city's

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<sup>144</sup> Elliott 'Temple versus Household' 234. The table as reproduced has been drawn substantially from Elliot's table titled 'Contrasts in Redistribution and Reciprocity'.

<sup>145</sup> Douglas E Oakman 'The Countryside in Luke-Acts' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 154-155. The chief productive factor in the pre-industrial agrarian society was land and the home was the place of work. The ancient family worked together on the land to produce a specialised product. In the rural village monetary exchanges were rare.

<sup>146</sup> Elliott 'Temple versus Household' 211-240. I am indebted to Elliott's understanding of the way in which Luke has juxtaposed the institutions of Temple and household throughout his

elite (chief priestly families, lay elders, Herodians) in collaboration with Rome's colonist policy. It became a system of exploitation causing poverty and distress to a growing number of peasants who were unable to pay the taxes required.<sup>147</sup>

Not only was the Jerusalem Temple the political and economic centre of first century Palestine it was also the means by which the people understood and maintained their relationship with God. The Temple was understood as the place where God dwelt, the expression of the holiness encoded in Genesis 1 and, therefore, of God's holiness. The Temple represented the chief visible symbol of Israel's identity as God's Holy people and their union with God.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, the Jerusalem Temple was at the

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gospel. This understanding has contributed significantly to the wider question of the symbolic presence of God addressed throughout this thesis.

<sup>147</sup> Elliott 'Temple versus Household' 235. Palestine's economic system of redistribution was maintained through the payment of tribute, temple taxes and offerings, tithes, and other debts. Taxes and tribute were collected from the villages and hinterland to provide a major source of income for the elite of the city. Economically cities depended on the countryside, and urbanites spent significant amounts of time engaged in activities other than agriculture. The city's elite was the only group with disposable income and so formed the only real market population in antiquity. The city elite dominated both city and country. Palestine's system of redistribution was 'seriously altering ancient land holding patterns, and eroding traditional forms of social relations'. The poverty of the peasants was chronic, and was politically induced. 'An increasing number of the peasant population, incapable of meeting the enormous demands of Rome and the Temple, were being forced to sell their lands and their family members into debt slavery. Impoverishment of the masses, imprisonment, destitution, and social unrest were on the rise. The gap between the landed 'haves' and the landless 'have nots' was growing, village patterns of co-operative labour and reciprocal social relations were being destroyed, and the poor and the powerless, once protected by norms of the Torah, were now the objects of exploitation and abandonment'.

<sup>148</sup> Myers *Binding* 81. Jerome H Neyrey 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 278.

heart of the Jewish purity system and as such set the pattern for Jewish life.<sup>149</sup> With reference to the Temple, certain ceremonies, people, places and times symbolised what was clean, pure and holy and other people, places, and times symbolised what was unclean and taboo.<sup>150</sup>

Both the institution of Temple and household feature prominently in Luke's narrative. While the gospel opens in the Temple and closes in the Temple, Jesus met with people in households, shared meals and formed family with those who came to faith. An understanding of the dynamics of the institution of both Temple and of household will assist our understanding of the Lucan narrative.

### **Legitimation**

The process of legitimation, a process by which the socially constructed world is maintained, takes place after the social institution has been established. It serves to support and maintain the social order. 'Legitimation is the process whereby socially objectivated "knowledge" serves to explain and justify the social order.'<sup>151</sup> Or as Esler

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<sup>149</sup> Neyrey 'Symbolic Universe' 277 Purity is a cultural map that indicates order, correct position, in placeness. Pollution indicates disorder, confusion, out of placeness. In first century Judaism purity and pollution took on specific meanings with certain people, places and times becoming pure, and others representing uncleanness or pollution. God's command for holiness formed the basis of the purity code for Israel. 'Be holy as I am holy' was one of the core values in first century Judaism. A person, place, thing or time is pure or holy insofar as it has a specific place and stays in that place. This notion of holiness became the norm (the purity code) which indicated how things in Israel's world should express the divine order established in God's initial programmatic action of creation.

<sup>150</sup> Neyrey 'Symbolic Universe' 277.

<sup>151</sup> Berger *Sacred Canopy* 29. On the basis of language a society builds a set of common understandings and normative interpretations, which passes for 'knowledge' in a society. 'In what it "knows" every society imposes a common order of interpretation upon experience

explains 'Legitimation is the collection of ways in which an institution is explained to its members.'<sup>152</sup> The process of legitimation ranges from the self-legitimizing existence of social institutions to the legitimation of social institutions in the face of challenge, or theoretical constructions of an all-embracing symbolic universe. Legitimation operates at both an objective and a subjective level.<sup>153</sup>

There is an important relationship between religion and legitimation. While legitimation maintains the socially defined reality, religion legitimates that reality. 'Religion legitimates reality by bestowing on it an ultimately valid ontological status, that is by locating that reality within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference.'<sup>154</sup> Religious legitimation has the unique capacity to locate human activity within a cosmic frame of reference, to ultimate, universal and sacred reality. When religious legitimations ground socially defined institutions in the ultimate reality of the universe, the institutions are given a semblance of inevitability, firmness, durability, that is analogous to the Gods themselves. Although these institutions remain tenuous, they are perceived as being stable: a manifestation of the structure of the

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that become "objective knowledge" by means of the process of objectivation.' Socially objectivated 'knowledge' consists of interpretative schemas, moral maxims and collections of traditional wisdom.

<sup>152</sup> Esler *Community* 16.

<sup>153</sup> Berger *Sacred Canopy* 32. Objectively legitimations exist as objectively valid and available definitions of reality. However, to be effective in supporting the integration of social institutions, legitimation needs to be subjectively valid also. The reality of the world as socially defined must also make sense for the individual, and give place to the life of the individual.

<sup>154</sup> Berger *Sacred Canopy* 33-35. The most ancient form of religious legitimation is the conception of the institutional order as directly reflecting or manifesting the divine structure of the cosmos. It has been transformed by the understanding of faith in a radically transcendent God of history.

universe. This has been referred to by Berger and Luckmann as a 'symbolic universe'.<sup>155</sup> The symbolic universe is a body of theoretical tradition that integrates different provinces of meaning and encompasses the institutional order in a symbolic totality. Within such a universe members of the institution have an experience of everything being in its right place and also of the various phases of their life as being ordered. As people look back into their past or forward into their future they conceive of their lives unfolding within a universe whose ultimate co-ordinates are known. People create a world of classification and definition to bring order out of chaos. This world becomes their symbolic universe. It acts as a sheltering canopy. It orders history and locates all collective acts in a cohesive unity that includes past, present and future. From birth people are socialised into perceiving the world in this way. Individuals are linked with their predecessors and successors in a meaningful way. They understand themselves as belonging to a universe before they were born and they will be there after they die.<sup>156</sup>

Problems emerge when a small group comes to share a version of the symbolic universe that is different to the one shared by society at large. In this case the symbolic universe of the deviant group, by its very existence, challenges the objective reality and existence of the original mainstream symbolic universe. The dominant group responds with repressive measures against the new group, who then in turn responds to the challenge. This in effect leads to the creation of two competing symbolic conceptions of reality. Alternatively, problems emerge when, through conflict or war, key symbols of the all-embracing symbolic universe are damaged or destroyed. This thesis proposes that Luke's community was facing both these

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<sup>155</sup> Peter L Berger *The Social Reality of Religion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969) 48.

challenges. Firstly, with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the symbolic universe of the Jews had been shattered. Secondly, as Jews rebuilt their world, there was conflict between those who had decided to convert to Christianity and those who did not. Luke's gospel, written in the light of these circumstances, legitimates the choice of Christians to convert to Christianity. Through the gospel Luke creates a new symbolic universe that is anchored in the person of Jesus Christ, but linked in terms of its past with Jewish history, Temple and scriptures, and in terms of its present and future with the anticipations of Israel of old.

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<sup>156</sup> Esler *Community* 18.

## CHAPTER 4: WOMEN IN 1ST CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY

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Malina's model of honour and shame provides a picture of society that was divided according to gender. Gender determined public and private role expectations for both women and men. Women were at the heart of the domestic private sphere, while men were located primarily in the public sphere.

Philo offers the following summary:

'Market places and council halls and law courts and gatherings and meetings where a large number of people are assembled, and open-air life with full scope for discussion and action – all these are suitable to men both in war and in peace. The women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house, within which the middle door is taken by the maidens as their boundary, and the outer door by those who have reached full womanhood.'<sup>157</sup>

Further, according to Philo, women and men are suited to different roles:

'... how unlike the bodily shapes of man and woman are, and each of the two has a different life assigned to it: to the one domestic, to the other an active life.'<sup>158</sup>

Antipater writes that a wife is important to allow a man to be free to go out of the house and pursue study or political affairs:

'... for the gentleman who wishes to have leisure for study or political affairs, or both, (married life) is absolutely necessary. For the more he goes out from the house, the

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<sup>157</sup> Philo, Loeb Classical Library, 10 Volumes, English translation by FH Colson (London, Massachusetts: William Heinemann, Harvard University Press, 1939). *Leg spec* 3.169.

more he ought to take to his side someone to take care of the house and make himself free from every day cares.<sup>159</sup>

Plutarch holds that it is unbecoming for a woman to engage in public debate:

‘And so their women, it is said, were too bold, putting on men’s airs with their husbands even, to begin with, since they ruled their houses absolutely, and besides, on public occasions, taking part in debate and the freest speech on the most important subjects. But Numa, while carefully preserving to the matrons that dignified and honourable relation to their husbands which was bestowed on them by Romulus, when he tried by kindly usage to efface the memory of the violence done them, nevertheless enjoined great modesty upon them, forbade them all busy intermeddling, taught them sobriety, and accustomed them to be silent; wine they were to refrain from entirely, and were not to speak, even the most necessary of topics, unless their husbands were with them.’<sup>160</sup>

Xenophon advocates a gender-based division of labour for husbands and wives, based on his understanding of the nature of God:

‘Now since we know what duties have been assigned to each of us by God, we must endeavour, each of us, to do the duties allotted to us as well as possible ... And besides, the law declares those tasks to be honourable for each of them wherein God has made the one to excel the other. Thus, to the woman it is more honourable to stay indoors than to abide in the fields, but to the man it is unseemly rather to stay indoors

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<sup>158</sup> Philo *Virt* 19.

<sup>159</sup> Antipater *On Marriage* (ed. Von Arnim) 256.34-257. I am indebted to Stuart Love for this quotation.

<sup>160</sup> Plutarch *Plutarch’s Lives* Loeb Classical Library, 11 Vol, English translation by Bernadotte Perrin (London, New York: William Heinemann, GP Putnam’s Sons, 1954) *Lycurgus and Numa* 3.5.

than to attend to the work outside. If a man acts contrary to the nature God has given him, possibly his defiance is detected by the gods and he is punished for neglecting his own work, or meddling with his wife's.'<sup>161</sup>

Hierocles illustrates a world divided by cultural understandings of gender:

'Before anything else I should speak about the occupations by which a household is maintained. They should be divided in the usual manner: namely to the husband should be assigned those which have to do with agriculture, commerce, and the affairs of the city; to the wife, those which have to do with spinning and the preparation of food, in short, those of a domestic nature.'<sup>162</sup>

The sources written by men paint a consistent picture of the place of women in a society divided by gender. In Hellenistic, Roman and Jewish society women belonged in the private domestic sphere while men took their place in the public arena. Kathleen Corey supports this when she claims:

'There was one major distinction, however, that governed all definitions of a woman's place in ancient society, regardless of her income or social class; namely, the distinction between "public" and "private" space.'<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Xenophon, Loeb Classical Library, 7 Vol; English translation by OJ Todd (London, Massachusetts: William Heinemann, Harvard University Press, 1968). *Oeconomicus* 7:30.

<sup>162</sup> Hierocles, *On Duties* 4:28.2.21ff. I am indebted to Jerome H Neyrey for this quotation.

<sup>163</sup> Kathleen E Corley *Private Women Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993) 15. Further support for the understanding that female space equals private domestic space and male space equals public space is found in the work of Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Jean Bethke Elshtain. See 'Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview' in *Women, Culture and Society* eds. MZ Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974) 17-42, also Bethke Elshtain *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981). Rosaldo *Women, Culture and Society* 23 has demonstrated that an opposition of 'public' and 'domestic' 'provides the basis of a structural framework necessary to identify and

However, while it is hard to piece together the actual lives of women in this period, consideration of a wider range of literary and non-literary sources presents a less consistent picture of the everyday lives of women. The circumstances of women's lives and the opportunities available to them varied considerably reflecting, to varying extents, the class into which they were born and the place and time of their birth. The everyday lives of mainly 'upper class' Hellenistic and Roman women were often in tension with the ideal. Some Jewish women occupied leadership positions in the synagogues of the Diaspora communities. Alongside these apparent anomalies the gender values of society characterised and influenced the life of most Hellenistic, Roman and Jewish women of this period.

### **Hellenistic Women**

The Hellenistic period in Greek and Roman history began after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE. It was a time of significant political and social change that brought new opportunities for both women and men.<sup>164</sup> Some women,

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explore the place of male and female in psychological, cultural, social, and economic aspects of life.'

<sup>164</sup> See Sarah B Pomeroy *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken, 1975) 120. Elizabeth M Tetlow *Women and Ministry in the New Testament* (New York: Paulist, 1980). Elaine Fantham, Helene Peet Foley, Natalie Boymel Kampen, Sarah B Pomeroy and H Alan Shapiro *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 140. Under Alexander the Great a vast cosmopolitan empire replaced the era of the Greek city-states. 'Loss of political autonomy on the part of city-states brought a change in men's political relationships to their societies and to each other. These changes in turn affected women's position in the family and in society. The effect on any individual woman depended largely on her social class and the area of the world in which she lived'. In the classical period in Athens Greek women had lived most of their lives inside their home, but 'in the Hellenistic period both men and women migrated to newly conquered

primarily the queens and wealthy respectable women, took the opportunity to develop roles which took them into the public arena. However, the fundamental position of Hellenistic women followed gender expectation.

In this period the Macedonian queens forged new roles for themselves. Some operated in public spheres quite outside the private household and assumed considerable political power.<sup>165</sup> While no Hellenistic queen had political power solely by virtue of birth, two women in Egypt succeeded the throne in their own right.<sup>166</sup> Other women from the ruling families also wielded power as wives of weak or absent kings or mothers of young sons. However, much of this gain came at the cost of being used by Hellenistic kings for political gain.<sup>167</sup>

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territories and forged new lives for themselves in the frontier outposts of Hellenism. In the new cosmopolitan cities some of the old city-state conventions were retained, while others were altered or discarded in response' to new situations. This was a period when cultures met and new patterns emerged.

<sup>165</sup> Tetlow *Ministry* 12. Bonnie Thurston *Women in the New Testament: Questions and Commentary* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998) 19. Pomeroy *Goddesses* 122-125. 'Among the Macedonian ruling families the bond between mother and son was often stronger than that between husband and wife. Many Macedonian kings engaged in polygamy and did not confer favoured status on any of their wives'. This fostered a climate of rivalry and competition between the queens on behalf of their sons. Some of the queens held real political power. Olympias, the mother of Alexander, ruled Greece while her son was away on his conquests. In Egypt, Arsinoe II co-ruled with her husband Ptolemy II. The images of both Olympias and Arsinoe II appeared on coins. In Egypt, Cleopatra IV, with her brother, Ptolemy XIII, inherited the throne of Egypt.

<sup>166</sup> Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II, and Cleopatra, the sister of Ptolemy III.

<sup>167</sup> Women were also used in passive roles by Hellenistic kings. The marriage of a Macedonian princess was often arranged by a male guardian for political reasons. When new alliances appeared more politically attractive the original marriage was dissolved - sometimes resulting in violence or misfortune.

The wider roles and less restricted activity of the Macedonian queens served as a new paradigm for wealthy and elite Greek women. Legal and economic responsibilities increased in the newly Hellenised cities.<sup>168</sup> Like the queens, wealthy women in this period received public honour for their benevolence. For married women living in urban or middle class society typical of most Hellenistic centres there was a growing sense of independence.<sup>169</sup> The expansion of a married woman's rights can be seen in Hellenistic marriage contracts that stated rights and obligations for both spouses.<sup>170</sup> There were new opportunities for women in the area of education.<sup>171</sup> Some women became poets or philosophers and some Hellenistic

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<sup>168</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 127, 130. See also Tetlow *Ministry* 13. Laws varied in different regions of the Empire. In Egypt women had the right to make contracts and wills and the obligation of taxation. Greek women required a male guardian when they 'made a public declaration or incurred a contractual obligation concerning persons or property'. 'Documents show women as purchasers, sellers, lessors, lessees, borrowers and lenders. Women were as liable as men for the various taxes that attached to these commercial activities. Women also had the right to receive and make legacies, acting with guardians, and they usually named their husband and children as heirs'. Married women borrowed money (assisted by their guardians), bought property, and agreed to loans made by their husbands. Greek women in Egypt were 'permitted to act without a guardian to write to the police or the government on their own behalf'.

<sup>169</sup> Fantham et al *Classical World* 155-161.

<sup>170</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 128-129. 'There were two codes of marital behaviour, one for the husband and another for the wife. There was also the stipulation that both codes were subject to interpretation by the couple's peers'. In the case of divorce the dowry was returned to the wife and the husband had to continue to support the children. Communal property was retained by the husband. See also Fantham et al *Classical World* 158. The earliest Greek marriage contract gives detailed provisions for self-help and assumes that the aggrieved wife will need to have dealings with men who are not her close kin when she seeks retribution from her husband.

<sup>171</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 137. There is evidence that women from the Greek world were given a rudimentary education in athletics, music, reading, and that women participated in professional athletics. See also Fantham et al *Classical World* 163.

women became artists. During the Hellenistic period women also began the formal study of medicine.<sup>172</sup>

In spite of all these new opportunities for respectable women society was still strongly patriarchal and women were excluded from the public arena. Greek citizenship was still acknowledged and Greek women bore the title of citizen. The normal prerequisite for Greek citizenship applied in Hellenistic cities. For children to be granted Greek citizenship required that both parents bore the title citizen. Legitimate children were the expected outcome of a formal marriage.<sup>173</sup> Women were not able to operate independently in the public arena. A male person, either father, husband or guardian governed a woman's position in society. Women were required to operate with a guardian when making a public declaration, or incurring a contractual obligation in relation to persons or property.<sup>174</sup> Women continued to be excluded from the political arena. Although some women gained additional legal and economic responsibility there was, except for a very small number of queens, little political gain for women.<sup>175</sup> Respectable Hellenistic women continued to participate in the public world through the men to whom they were related.

The new opportunities open to upper class women had little regard for the less respected women. The lives of 'ordinary' women revolved around the domestic

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<sup>172</sup> Fantham et al *Classical World* 168.

<sup>173</sup> Sarah B Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic Egypt from Alexander to Cleopatra* (New York: Schocken, 1984) 47.

<sup>174</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 127.

<sup>175</sup> Eva Cantarella *Pandora's Daughters: The Role and Status of Women in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1987) 90-91. Note that

sphere of the patriarchal household.<sup>176</sup> Many women who had migrated to other cities, such as Alexandria, with their husband or family were left alone when their relative died or left on military service.<sup>177</sup> Women in this situation often became 'public' women, as they drifted into prostitution. Exposure of unwanted infants was also widely practised.<sup>178</sup> Many of the female infants were saved but grew to work as prostitutes.<sup>179</sup> A few prostitutes, euphemistically referred to as companions (*heterai*), led a glamorous life. They were public women, taking their place in the public world of men. Hellenistic courtesans mingled with many of the leading men in the state: they were primarily men of the Macedonian court. The courtesans were the most sophisticated women of their time - and the most notorious.<sup>180</sup> The lives of 'ordinary women' were either found in the domestic private world of the household, or as public women in the public sphere alongside men.

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Tetlow *Ministry* 14 writes against this: 'Women exercised political power with skill. Political and economic power made some women equal in status to men.'

<sup>176</sup> Thurston *Women in the New Testament* 21.

<sup>177</sup> Pomeroy *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* 74.

<sup>178</sup> An abandoned infant automatically had slave status, unless proven freeborn. Evidence shows that some slave traders invested in rearing exposed infants.

<sup>179</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 140-141. Prostitutes could never become legitimate wives so many of the male population were unable to marry due to a lack of females of marriageable age - caused by exposure of female babies. If the prostitute was freed she would, 'like any freed slave, still continue to owe service to her former master or mistress. Her children could be claimed as her master's property and sold to a brothel'. 'Whether the prostitute was slave or freed her clients were most likely to be other slaves, freedman or obscure freeborn', rather than wealthy upper class men. 'Prostitution was potentially lucrative for the prostitute herself or her owner should she be a slave'.

<sup>180</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 141.

## **Roman Women**

The situation of Roman women was also quite ambiguous. The conservative ideal of the Roman woman was maintained from the Republic.<sup>181</sup> Growing Hellenisation, however, as well as the disruption of the civil war years and the period of Augustan legal reforms, meant that, in practice, the lives of wealthy Roman women were now quite at odds with the gender values of a domestic, private and submissive lifestyle. Wealthy independent Roman women lived lives of almost unrestricted freedom.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Judith P Hallett 'The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter Cultural Feminism' in *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers* eds. John Peradotta and JP Sullivan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) 241. Hallett cites the ideal Roman woman in the eyes of an obituary writer in late second century BCE, 'she kept her household; she made wool.' She continues to spell this role out as 'submissiveness, supportiveness, and stability.'

<sup>182</sup> Tetlow *Ministry* 16. 'According to Roman law women were under the power of the head of the household, the pater familias', who 'arranged marriages and appointed guardians for the women of his family'. However, 'by the time of Augustus, a free woman was exempt from the control of a guardian after she had borne three children, a freedwoman after she had given birth to four. The law of guardians was not rigidly enforced and women often enacted business without them'. The Augustan Legal Reforms brought the issues of marriage and reproduction that had previously been in the control of families, especially the father, into the public arena and under community control. They offered rewards and freedoms for women who upheld the political agenda of marriage, idealised family and legitimate children. The Augustan laws were first issued in 18 BCE as the *Lex Julia* and then revised in 9 CE as the *Lex Papia Poppaea*. See also Fantham et al *Classical World* 302-305. 'They had as their goals the moral revitalising of the upper class, the raising of the birth rate among citizens, and the policing of sexual behaviour'. The Augustan laws attempted 'to reintroduce conservative social values and control the social conduct of the upper class, which was seen as being more interested in pleasure and autonomy than in duty and community'. 'The Augustan laws penalised people who did not marry or have children by attacking their eligibility to inherit wealth'. Those who remained unmarried were disabled from taking inheritances and legacies, and those who did not have any children forfeited half of their inheritances and legacies. Both the Augustan Laws, the *Lex Julia* and the *Lex Papia Poppaea*, 'rewarded women for having larger families'. The Augustan laws continued to provide for guardianship to be terminated

The Roman matrons owned wealth, administered it independently and bought assets as businesswomen.<sup>183</sup> Women built public buildings and temples, they participated in city offices and they acted as patrons.<sup>184</sup> Roman women could go out with their husband to dine, and they could leave the house and go for a walk during the day. They could go to the theatre, go to visit friends or chat with friends in the park. The wealthy Roman matron often achieved a high social profile.<sup>185</sup> Certainly within the household and marriage wealthy Roman matrons often exhibited considerable power.<sup>186</sup> Sarah Pomeroy summarises the freedoms of Roman women as follows:

‘Roman women were involved with their culture and were able to influence their society, whereas Athenian women were isolated and excluded from activities outside the home. Roman women dined with their husbands and attend respectable parties, games, shows, and even political gatherings ... Roman women had access to money, power, and their fortunes were linked to those of the state. As men prospered so did women.’<sup>187</sup>

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for a free woman after the birth of three children and for a freedwoman after the birth of four children. The freedwoman could make testaments without the patron’s authorisation, so long as a proportionate share was due to the patron. The Augustan laws also brought benefits to freedwomen as they allowed all freeborn males, (except senators), to marry freedwomen and for their offspring to be held as legitimate. Hallett ‘Roman Elegy’ 243 comments that ‘this arrangement also entitled either party to a divorce if he, or she, so wished’.

<sup>183</sup> Luise Schottroff *Let the Oppressed Go Free: Feminist Perspectives on the New Testament* (Westminster: John Knox, 1992) 81. Cf. Corley *Private Women* 12. ‘Many Roman matrons became active in Roman society, religion, philosophy and politics’.

<sup>184</sup> Corley *Private Women* 12. Marriage without *manus* meant that a woman could retain her inheritance from her father, in her own name. The Augustan reforms meant that she could control her own finances.

<sup>185</sup> Wendy Cotter ‘Women’s Authority Roles in Paul’s Churches: Countercultural or Conventional’ *NovT* 36 (1994) 362-363.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Mark 6:14-29. The story of Herodias can be taken as representative of the power and independence exhibited by women in the leading families in the Roman Empire.

<sup>187</sup> Pomeroy *Goddesses* 189.

Pomeroy's last comment raises concern as to whether the freedoms of wealthy Roman women were real or illusory. Hallett also strongly asserts that Roman society offered its women only a limited and illusory brand of liberation.<sup>188</sup> While Augustan reforms did give some freedom to women this freedom was inextricably bound with the politics of state. The Augustan reforms were fundamentally a programme to address the declining birth rate amongst the upper class and to repopulate the empire and maintain state control. Through the idealising of the Imperial family, the representation of family and the political programme were effectively joined. Women played a major role in both.<sup>189</sup> Ideally women's lives were still contained within the framework of marriage and reproduction. Marital fidelity and harmony were the expressed virtues of women in Roman society in this period. Upper class Roman women lived at a point of conflict. Wealth and independence allowed them great opportunities. State order and political ideology required and allowed something different.

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<sup>188</sup> Hallett 'Roman Elegy' 243. Whatever freedoms did exist, existed for only a minority of women, the wealthy and the rootless and, compared with the opportunities for men, even the most emancipated and assertive women lived in bondage. Of the Augustan reforms she writes 'they were designed for the replenishing of the depleted senatorial and equestrian ranks ... Catullus, Tibullus Propertius and Ovid all reveal discontent with both the traditional Roman view of women as demure submissive chattels and the current Roman practices which allowed women an ostensible increase in freedom so as to exploit them more fully'.

<sup>189</sup> The Imperial family was depicted as a harmonious family; women and children became symbols of legitimacy and the security of a peaceful future. The continuity of the Imperial family under a dignified protective father and a noble and fertile mother guaranteed the health and happiness of the Roman people and its children. This image of the model family was disseminated throughout the empire on works of art, coins, domestic shrines, in the patronage of buildings and the inscriptions that marked them, and in the ceremonies and choreographed public appearances of members of the court.

Women were excluded from direct involvement in public functions.<sup>190</sup> The freedoms gained by Roman women still did not allow them full participation in Roman society. Cotter claims that 'wealthy powerful women had to use indirect means to have their views made public, and to have their political leanings represented.'<sup>191</sup> When they personally entered a court or a public arena they were judged to have offended and stepped outside respectable boundaries.<sup>192</sup> Through acts of personal generosity or public benevolence, women used their wealth to participate in the public arena as private citizens. They received an ambiguous response from the male elite. There was praise for a woman's achievements, but condemnation at her not fulfilling the Roman ideal of virtue. Women were unable to vote or hold public office. At every level in the upper classes women demonstrate the ambiguity of the terms 'public' and 'private' for the Roman world.<sup>193</sup>

Outside the wealthy and respectable society the lives of 'ordinary' women are much harder to trace. There are fewer sources and their lives were subject to greater

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<sup>190</sup> Jane F Gardner *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986) 258. See also Gardner *Women* 165 'Although women could be witnesses in courts of law, they were excluded from being witnesses to wills – along with minors, slaves, deaf-mutes, lunatics, prodigals and convicted'.

<sup>191</sup> Cotter 'Women's Authority' 366.

<sup>192</sup> This point is obvious in the comments of Valerius Maximus about the three women who came to court. Maximus, Valerius *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium Libri novem* C Kempf (Stuttgart: BG Teubner, 1888) 8.3. His preface begins 'We ought not to pass over in silence those women whom the circumstances of the nature, and the modesty of their sex were not able to prevent from speaking in the Forum or in the courts.' See also Cotter 'Women's Authority' 366 for reference to Valerius Maximus *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* translation by K Dickison, 'Women in Rome' *Civilisation of the Ancient Mediterranean*, 3 1321.

<sup>193</sup> Fantham et al *Classical World* 366.

diversity depending on their social position, geography and the degree of Romanisation in the region. Women's status was accorded at birth. They were freeborn or slave. Many women born in slavery earned their purchase price and their freedom, granting them the status of freedwoman. Freedwomen were found at various levels of economic means. They undertook a variety of tasks and their occupations were quite varied.<sup>194</sup> Many ordinary women were born into free families of various social means. Free women could enter into legal marriages and, as for freedwomen, free women occupied a range of occupations.<sup>195</sup> Slaves were at the bottom of the Roman social hierarchy. They were non-persons in a legal sense and their bodies and labour belonged to their owners.<sup>196</sup> The roles occupied by most women outside the wealthy and elite aristocracy were consistent with gender ideology of private role expectations. Fantham claims that although there is a great deal of variation within the lives of 'ordinary' women gender ideology and the gender values of division of labour were reflected in funerary monuments, inscriptions, reliefs, literature and other testimonia for non-elite women within the

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<sup>194</sup> Corley *Private Women* 13. Poorer freedwomen worked as 'shopkeepers, innkeepers, weavers, artisans, actresses, musicians, butchers or prostitute's. Others worked in the textile industry. Some 'became wealthy merchants in various trades and sold luxury items such as purple dye for making cloth'. Some freedwomen remained at their former master's house 'as cooks, domestic servants, table waitresses or hairdressers'.

<sup>195</sup> Corley *Private Women* 14. Some were 'small property owners, merchants, or tradespeople'. As for freedwomen the poorer free women worked in the businesses of others as 'shopkeepers, butchers, innkeepers, weavers, fishers, waitresses, shoemakers, or prostitutes'.

<sup>196</sup> Corley *Private Women* 15. 'Female slaves were primarily domestic servants – food preparers, cooks, table servants and hairdressers'. They were involved at banquets as entertainers – 'playing the cithara and the flute, acting and dancing as well as sometimes serving the food'. Business owners would also use slaves. Schottroff *Let the Oppressed* 88-89 notes that there were women among the slaves in the mines. Women slaves were also used on farms working in the fields. Corley *Private Women* 48. Many slaves were also prostitutes and the lowest class of prostitutes were owned outright by their brothel keepers.

empire.<sup>197</sup> She writes 'the sexual division of labour - domesticity for women, outside occupations for men - seems to have determined the roles and character attributes that most lower class families commemorated in women's funerary monuments all over the Empire.'<sup>198</sup>

While most of the non-elite women are found in occupations and roles that support the ideal of female domesticity, the poorest of the non-elite Roman women worked within the public sphere. They were either slaves, or poor free or freedwomen working outside the private world of family and household. Those who worked with men and alcohol, managed stores, taverns or who worked as entertainers, cooks, barmaids, and waitresses, compromised their reputation and were referred to in the legal texts as quasi prostitutes.<sup>199</sup> Gardner says they were, by the praetor's edict, subject to *infamia* (dishonourable, shameless, outside the law) and had little protection or redress against sexual molestation.<sup>200</sup> Prostitutes were also subject to *infamia*. Prostitutes, slaves and women involved in public occupations were considered outside the law. They were outsiders. They did not conform to or respect gender values of private and public. They, too, were public women in public occupations.

### **Jewish Women**

The Jewish people believed their identity as God's chosen people determined the pattern of their personal and communal life. The place and role of women in Jewish society was determined within this context. According to Josephus:

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<sup>197</sup> Fantham et al *Classical World* 375.

<sup>198</sup> Fantham et al *Classical World* 369.

<sup>199</sup> Fantham et al *Classical World* 380.

'Religion governs all our actions and occupations and speech; none of these things did our lawgiver leave unexamined or indeterminate ... even our women folk and dependants would tell you that piety must be the motive for all our occupations.'<sup>201</sup>

The Hebrew scriptures speak of the place of women in Jewish society. The laws, given in the Torah, address the role of women within a patriarchal domestic framework. The Jewish concern for purity places certain requirements on women's participation in society. However, in contrast to the private, household environment, some women are also found in places of leadership within the Hebrew scriptures. The Mishnah, based on the Torah, provides an elaborate interpretation of the role of women in Jewish society in line with traditional gender values. The writings of Philo reflect a clear gender-specific role for women. Yet, when these understandings are considered alongside non-literary evidence, an inconsistent picture of the role of women emerges. Bernadette Brooten has shown that women occupied positions of leadership within the synagogues of the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>202</sup>

The Jewish scriptures, within a patriarchal framework, were a source document for the Jewish community. Although, for the most part, they speak of the place and role of Jewish women within the household, there has been considerable debate as to the status they ascribe to women. Wegner has argued that Scripture's laws display two distinct tendencies. Some deal with 'women's rights', treating women as persons,

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<sup>200</sup> Gardner *Women* 246.

<sup>201</sup> Josephus *Con Ap II*: 164ff.

<sup>202</sup> Bernadette Brooten *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogues: Inscriptural Evidence and Background Issues* Brown Judaic Studies 36 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982).

while others treat women as property.<sup>203</sup> Meyers appeals to general ethnographic research. She uses the insights into women's roles and the dynamics of gender relationships in societies analogous to ancient Israel to add to our understanding of the biblical text and archaeological record.<sup>204</sup> Meyers describes women at work,

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<sup>203</sup> Judith Romney Wegner *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 13. 'Ex 21:10 speaks of a wife's right to maintenance and Num 27:1-11 establishes a daughter's right to inherit from her father in the absence of sons. A third, Num 30:2-17, specifies the varying capacity of daughters, wives and unattached women to make binding vows'. In these cases biblical law assigns women 'certain rights or powers and so treats them as persons'. Alternatively other biblical laws treat women as property. Ex 20:14 (Tenth commandment) 'forbids an Israelite to covet his neighbour's possessions, wife, slaves, cattle, or anything else that belongs to his neighbour'. Deut 22:22, the prohibition on adultery, defines a married woman with the strong connotation as one owned by her husband. In Ex 22:15-16 and Deut 22:28-29 'a daughter is perceived as the property of her father. He collects the bride price from the man who marries her or from the one who rapes or seduces her'. 'The bride price compensates for the daughter's loss of virginity, the father's economic asset'. Laws of adultery, Ex 20:13, Lev 18:20, Deut 22:22 again enforce the idea of woman as property as they 'prohibit intercourse between a man and another man's wife, but not between a married man and an unmarried woman'. Deut 24:1 relates to the formalities of divorce and allows for a husband to release a wife but makes no provision or possibility for a wife to divorce a husband. Wegner *Chattel* 13. 'The conclusion that no such option existed in biblical Israelite society is admittedly an argument from silence; but we can see the logic of a system that permits a man to discard his property but finds no way for that property to discard its owner.'

<sup>204</sup> Carol L Meyers 'Everyday Life: Women in the period of the Hebrew Bible' in *The Women's Bible Commentary* eds. Carol A Newsom and Sharon H Ringe (London: SPCK, 1992) 245-246. Israel was largely a farming people, living in small farming villages. 'Daily life centred on the family household' that included several generations of family and retainers and formed the basic social and economic unit of society. 'Most households survived by growing grains, olives and grapes'. They also kept a number of domestic animals, 'such as sheep, goats, cows and oxen'. On this methodology it must be noted that there are also possible difficulties and cautions to be respected when one is using the insights from one cultural/environmental setting to interpret another.

highlighting the control they exercised over critical aspects of household life.<sup>205</sup> She argues that the bearing and raising of children was an integral part of every woman's life.<sup>206</sup> Meyers claims that the impressions of gender hierarchy based on biblical texts must be weighed against this growing knowledge of Ancient Israel's social reality. She argues that within the context of the extended household of the agricultural village, the category of gender was of little significance.<sup>207</sup> While the status of women

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<sup>205</sup> Meyers 'Everyday Life' 247. Women spent an extraordinary amount of time carrying out life-supporting daily activities and they were engaged in tasks that required a high degree of technological expertise. Women were involved in the outdoor fieldwork. 'Planting, weeding and harvesting activities depended on the women's involvement'. Fieldwork 'typically took four to five hours a day' of a woman's labour. Women were also involved in preserving foodstuffs after the growing season, and 'did much of the threshing, drying, pounding and pitting of foodstuffs to ensure a year round supply of food'. They were responsible for processing food, such as cereal crops that require 'a complex and time consuming series of operations to make them into flour, which must then be mixed and baked'. Preparation of dairy foodstuffs and routine care, feeding and milking of domestic animals also fell to the responsibility of women. Indoor tasks assigned to women included 'making most items of clothing used by the family', which probably involved 'shearing of the wool or preparation of flax, carding and spinning of thread, the weaving of cloth and the sewing of garments'. As well as household garments, women were also involved in the making of 'household vessels and implements'.

<sup>206</sup> Meyers 'Everyday Life' 248-249. 'In agricultural households, the tending of small children was subsumed into the routine of subsistence tasks'. 'The socialisation of young people was accomplished largely by women', who assumed responsibility for the 'transmission of culture, technology and values in Israelite society'. Women assumed a managerial role in the family. They were not only responsible for younger children, but ensured the smooth running of the household. 'Women also played a large part in the specifically religious or ritual features of family life' as both organisers and participants. In addition to 'their regular sacral activity carried out in the households as well as in the villages and cities of ancient Israel, some women held special expertise in public performance'.

<sup>207</sup> Meyers 'Everyday Life' 250. 'Females were mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, and they were also bakers, cooks, weavers, managers, teachers and worshippers. All these roles involved some combination of social, economic and biological functions. Only when separated from households might sex, and thus the category 'woman', emerge as a salient

may not be clear from the varying opinions of Wegner and Meyers, the place of women in the household is in line with typical gender values.

The biblical laws concerning purity also address the role, place and relationships of women. These laws strictly prohibit sexual relationships with a menstruant, they render a woman unclean for the menstrual period, and make everything she touches unclean (Lev 15:19-33). While most of the biblical laws relate to women in the household or domestic setting, various public roles, even if in a limited sense, were open to women in Israel. The Scriptures speak of women as judge, prophet, queen, army commander and worship leaders.<sup>208</sup> They do not refer to women as priestesses in Israel.<sup>209</sup>

The Mishnah was a book of legal rules compiled by the sages in second century Roman Palestine.<sup>210</sup> In reality, it is difficult to know how accurately these rules

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feature in their identity. For most women, life apart from households was just not a possibility, and so belonging to an abstract category according to sex was of little relevance'.

<sup>208</sup> See Evelyn and Frank Stagg *Women in the World of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978) 27. Thurston *Women in the New Testament* 16. Moses was spared as a baby by his sister and mother (Ex 2:1-10); Miriam, a prophetess and Aaron's sister, led all the women in celebration of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea (Ex 15:20ff); Deborah, prophetess and judge in Israel, summoned and commanded Barak, and with the assistance of the woman Jael, delivered the Israelites from the Canaanite general Sisera (Judges 4-5); the prophetess Huldah was sought out for her counsel by Hilkiah the priest and the king's ministers and she was a major force in Jewish reforms (2 Kings 22:14-19). King Saul appealed to the woman medium of Endor (1 Sam 28:7-25) and Esther is celebrated for using her beauty and wits to save her people.

<sup>209</sup> Stagg *World of Jesus* 29. Stagg claims this was due to laws of cleanliness. A woman's menstrual period would mean she was unclean and incompatible with the holiness codes.

<sup>210</sup> Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 93 notes the difficulty of rabbinic sources to portray accurately the social realities of the times. She claims

reflected the actual practice of women in Israel. However, the Mishnah does reflect a certain segment of Jewish society's concept of the 'ideal' place of women in the period 70 CE-200 CE. It consists of 63 tractates, grouped under six divisions, the third of which is entitled 'Nashim' - 'Women'. The Mishnah offers a model of a socio-economic system in which the free adult Israel male is central.<sup>211</sup> It guards the purity and sanctity of a society set apart by Yahweh.<sup>212</sup>

The Mishnah addressed the place of women within the household. The relationship of a daughter to her father was determined by her age.<sup>213</sup> The betrothal ceremony

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that as more scholars are beginning to concede 'rabbinic sources may at best refract the social realities of a handful of Jewish communities, and at worst may reflect only the utopian visions of a relative handful of Jewish men.'

<sup>211</sup> See Jacob Neusner 'From Scripture to Mishnah: The Origins of Mishnah's Division of Women' *JJS* 30 (1979) 138-153. Neusner has noted that only three Jewish groups in late antiquity deny women significant social, political, and religious roles, namely the Essenes, the Temple Priests and the Rabbis. He suggests that the basis of rabbinic attitudes towards women originates in priestly circles. Wegner *Chattell* 169-173 observes that the Mishnaic regulation of women is concerned almost solely with the points at which women become anomalous in rabbinic society - those times at which their relationships to men are in transition: when they are eligible for marriage, but not yet married; when they divorce; when they are widowed; and when they enter into illicit sexual relationships. See also Ross S Kraemer 'Women in the Religions of the Greco-Roman World' *RelSRev* Vol 9, No 2 (April 1983) 130.

<sup>212</sup> Wegner *Chattel* 4. 'The stress on cultic purity extended to every detail of daily life; the sages aimed to preserve not only the sanctity of sacred space and time - the Land of Israel and the sabbaths and festivals ordained in Scripture - but also the purity of people, place, and objects involved in sacred rites.'

<sup>213</sup> There were distinctions between a minor daughter (under the age of 12 years and one day), a young girl (from 12 years to 12½) and a maiden of full age (12½). Up to the age of 12½ the father had full power over his daughter (M.Ket.4.4). The girl over 12½ had come of age, and was independent and could not be betrothed against her will.

began to transfer the daughter from the father's power to that of her husband.<sup>214</sup> Marriage took place one year after betrothal. At that point the girl passed from the power of her father to that of her husband (M.Ned.5.5). The young couple then generally lived with the husband's family. The husband was obliged to support his wife.<sup>215</sup> The wife's duties were household duties.<sup>216</sup> The wife was obliged to obey her husband. Children were to respect their father above that of their mother. Polygamy was practised and the right to divorce was that of the husband's.<sup>217</sup> The Mishnah made the bearing of children a duty.<sup>218</sup>

Ordinary women were often involved in work outside the household.<sup>219</sup> However, they did not participate in the public life of the community. Wegner claims that this is the motive for the exclusion of women from the courtroom as witnesses.<sup>220</sup> While there was a specific law disqualifying women as witnesses as a general principle,

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<sup>214</sup> Joachim Jeremais *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1969) 367. Betrothal was preceded by courtship and the drawing-up of a marriage contract and signified the acquisition of the woman by the man. See also M.Ket. 4.4-12; M.Ket.5.2.

<sup>215</sup> Jeremais *Jerusalem* 368. She could demand this in a court of law. He had to provide her with food, clothing and shelter and to fulfil his conubial duty. He was also to redeem his wife in case of her captivity (M.Ket.4.4, 8-9), to give her medicines if she were ill (M.Ket.4.9), and to provide a funeral for her if she died. He had to produce two flute players and one woman mourner, and where it was custom to make a funeral oration for a woman he had to provide that as well (M.Ket.4.4).

<sup>216</sup> Jeremais *Jerusalem* 369. She had to grind meal, bake, wash, cook, suckle the children, prepare her husband's bed and as repayment for her keep, to work the wool by spinning and weaving (M.Ket.5.5; M Ket 6.1).

<sup>217</sup> Jeremais *Jerusalem* 370.

<sup>218</sup> Stagg *World of Jesus* 50. The absence of children was considered a great misfortune, even a divine punishment.

<sup>219</sup> Drawing water at a well or spring was women's work (M.Ket.1.10). Women worked in the fields (M.Yeb.15.2). They could assist their husband in selling his wares (M Ket.9.4).

many exceptions arose from actual custom and practice. During a normal court case a woman's testimony was not sought because 'no man wants his wife to degrade herself in court' (b.Ket.74b), but the testimony which could not otherwise be obtained was accepted.<sup>221</sup>

The religious lives of Jewish women according to the rabbinic tradition were considerably more limited than those of men. Women did not necessarily participate in the public worship and religious life of the community. Jewish women were excluded from the whole system of religious commands unless otherwise stated. All positive commands that depended on time, most of which related to ritual and liturgy, were incumbent on men only.<sup>222</sup> The observance of all positive commands that did not depend on time was incumbent on both women and men. These were in effect the commands relating to everyday life. There were three commands that applied to women only. These were the lighting of the sabbath candle, separation of the dough, and *niddah* (the laws of menstrual purity).<sup>223</sup> For these transgressions women would die in childbirth (M.Shab. 2.6).<sup>224</sup> It is uncertain as to whether women

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<sup>220</sup> Wegner *Chattel* 173.

<sup>221</sup> Tal Ilan *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine: An Inquiry into Image and Status* (Tubingen: JCB Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995) 165. See also preceding discussion Ilan *Jewish Women* 164 where Ilan quotes the work of Gershon Holzer who in his article 'Woman's Testimony in Jewish Law' lists matters for which a woman's testimony can be accepted. Further, he indicates that when a woman's testimony is accepted it is on equal footing with that of a man.

<sup>222</sup> Ilan *Jewish Women* 176 n1. Women were often grouped with others who were not independent entities, but they were compared principally with slaves.

<sup>223</sup> Ilan *Jewish Women* 177-184 for full discussion of women and the commands.

<sup>224</sup> Wegner *Chattel* 155. In discussing these three commands Wegner notes that the separating of the dough and the obligation to observe ritual purity were scriptural precepts incumbent on men. The lighting of the lamps before sundown (to avoid the temptation to violate the law by lighting the lamp after dark) was also incumbent on men, although it had no scriptural

in rabbinic communities studied the Torah. Ilan concludes 'There was no formal education system for girls who learnt to read and write at home if there was someone to teach them. Commandments and laws relating to keeping a *kosher* Jewish kitchen were meticulously learnt. If a woman studied the Torah she would probably concentrate on a relatively simple book of Genesis',<sup>225</sup>

The Mishnah portrays a society in which gender determined the public, private and religious role expectations of women. A reading of the Mishnah led Jeremais to conclude 'eastern women take no part in public life'.<sup>226</sup> Wegner claims that the key to the differential treatment of women in the Mishnah lies specifically in the sexuality factor.<sup>227</sup> She also argues that the differential treatment of women refers only to

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authority. Wegner claims that these three precepts are, in fact, time-bound and, according to the sages, logic should, therefore, exempt the women. She claims that the separation of the dough falls to the women because they are the ones who bake the bread (M.Ket.5.5), and the women must light the Sabbath candles to prevent the men who have already gone off to the synagogue from having to light the lamps on his return, and thereby 'transgress the Sabbath by kindling a light' (Ex 35:3). 'A wife's neglect of these religious duties makes her husband a transgressor'. Kraemer *Her Share* 100 in support of this opinion writes, 'The primary role of religious observance for Jewish women, in the rabbinic view, is to enable men to fulfil their covenantal obligations.'

<sup>225</sup> Ilan *Jewish Women* 204. This is at odds with the work of Brooten, *Women in Ancient Synagogues* who examined the role of women in synagogues in the Roman Empire. It may well be that Ilan cites the general situation while Brooten identifies where women have stepped outside these boundaries.

<sup>226</sup> Jeremais *Jerusalem* 359. If a woman went outside without her head covered and her face veiled she committed such an offence that her husband had a duty to put her away from him and he was under no obligation to pay the sum of money due to her on divorce (M.Ket.7.6).

<sup>227</sup> Wegner *Chattel* 19. 'Whenever some man has a proprietary interest in the sexual and reproductive function of a specified girl or woman, the Mishnah's framers treat that woman as the man's chattel in all matters that affect his ownership of his sexuality; in all other contexts the dependent woman is treated as a person. When, by contrast no man has a legal

transactions in the private sphere, as this defines the limits of women's participation in Jewish society after the fall of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>228</sup>

Non-rabbinic sources paint a different picture of women in Jewish communities. On the basis of non-literary evidence Brooten has shown that in the Diaspora communities some women functioned outside the gender boundaries of private and domestic to serve in the public life of the Jewish community, including as synagogue leaders. Brooten cites 19 Greek and Latin inscriptions that range in date from 27 BCE-6 CE from as far afield as Italy, Asia Minor, Egypt and Palestine where women bear the title of head of the synagogue, leader, elder, mother of the synagogue and priestess. She argues that the women who held these titles in burial or donative inscriptions are most likely to have held those offices in their own right and not to have derived their titles from offices held by their husband or father.<sup>229</sup> Kraemer and Brooten further develop the meaning and significance of these titles. Kraemer claims that the term synagogue can designate not only physical premises, but also discreet congregations and whole Jewish communities as social and political entities.<sup>230</sup> Brooten offers a reconstruction of the offices that were held by women: synagogue heads, synagogue leaders, mother, elders and possibly priest or priestess.<sup>231</sup> She

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claim on a woman's sexuality the system always treats her as a person, both in sex related and other matters.'

<sup>228</sup> Wegner *Chattel* 19. Women have no right to participate in the public cultural domain. Gender or a woman's sexuality justifies excluding her from the intellectual and spiritual pursuits of the androcentric Israelite community.

<sup>229</sup> Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 1. See also Kraemer *Her Share* 118.

<sup>230</sup> Kraemer *Her Share* 118.

<sup>231</sup> Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 32. Women synagogue heads 'were active in administration and exhortation'. While they may have worked with women there was no reason to presume that they only worked with women. They possibly 'looked after the

argues that while limited inscriptions have been found the evidence must be treated seriously, recognising a wider role for women in the synagogue communities of the Diaspora.<sup>232</sup> In addition it is known that Jewish women were attendees of the synagogues and that they donated to their construction and upkeep. Kraemer claims that the title mother/father of the synagogue was related to the benefaction system, and thus to influence and prestige within the city. Furthermore, she argues for the possibility that women's leadership was particularly likely in Jewish synagogues with relatively high numbers of proselytes, both male and female.<sup>233</sup>

Although in practice the role and place of Jewish women seemed to vary considerably, the ideal portrayed through Philo, the Scriptures and the Mishnah

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financial affairs of the synagogue', 'exhorted their congregations, reminding them to keep the Sabbath'. It must also be assumed that they 'had a knowledge of the Torah' and were able to teach others. Kraemer *Her Share* 119. 'It is likely that the ancient synagogue heads also represented Jewish communities in their relations with other Jews and non-Jewish neighbours and civic authorities.' Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 39. Women synagogue leaders could be seen in the light of 'founders of the Jewish community'. Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 55. Evidence supports the functioning of a council of elders 'who may have had some oversight of the synagogue finances'. 'Women elders would have been as involved in these financial matters as were their male counterparts'. 'The technical terminology of the inscriptions' also raises the distinct possibility that women of the inscriptions were scholars who were involved in reading the scriptures in the synagogue'. Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 72. 'There is solid evidence that women bore the title mother of the synagogue'. The mother of the synagogue would have had some role in administration of the synagogue as well as being a member of the synagogue's leading family. Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 98-99. While it is known that although women bore the title priest/priestess it is not known conclusively what this role signified. However' it must also be emphasised that if the three inscriptions had come from another Graeco-Roman religion, no scholar would have thought of arguing that "priest" does not really mean "priest".'

<sup>232</sup> Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 72.

reflected gender expectation and values. Ilan claims that all sources describe the same ideal picture of society: women provide what is asked of them - producing legal heirs, doing housework, remaining faithful to their husbands, and using their beauty to make their husband's lives more pleasant. Women who deviate from this perfect behaviour are described as wicked.<sup>234</sup> From the work of Kraemer and Broton it could be suggested that women who lived further from the Jewish centre, in areas where there were many proselytes, were more likely to violate gender expectations and function acceptably in public roles as leaders in Jewish community and synagogue life.

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<sup>233</sup> Kraemer *Her Share* 123.

<sup>234</sup> Ilan *Jewish Women* 226. Ilan's study addressed the question of the social status of Jewish women in Palestine during the Hellenistic-Roman period covering the period from the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE-200 CE. In doing so she has drawn on a wide range of literary and non-literary sources.

## **PART TWO      WOMEN IN THE STORY**

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Chapters 5 to 9 will focus on the presentation of women in the Lucan narrative. The stories of women in the Lucan narrative will be explored in the light of the social and cultural setting of the first century Jewish world, the gender specific roles and spaces of women and men and the institutional systems of Temple and household.

Luke's narrative includes stories of:

- Women associated with Jesus' birth: Mary (Luke 1:27-2:52) and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-2:66).
- Widows: Luke refers to Anna (Luke 2:36-38) and the widow at Zarephath (Luke 4:25-30). He introduces us to the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), tells a parable about a widow in Luke 18:1-8 and highlights the situation of the poor widow at the treasury (Luke 21:1-4).
- Women who were sick or sinners who were healed by Jesus: the woman of the city, a sinner who came to Jesus at the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:36-50), Jairus' daughter and the woman with the haemorrhage (Luke 8:40-55), the woman who was a cripple (Luke 13:10-17). Parables about the kingdom include the parable about the woman and leaven and the woman and the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).

- Women who ministered, and who obeyed Jesus' words: Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39), the women who traveled with Jesus (Luke 8:2-3), Jesus' mother (and brothers) (Luke 8:19-21), Mary and Martha who were visited by Jesus (Luke 10:38-42), the women along the road who declared Mary's womb and breasts blessed (Luke 11:27-28).
- Women on the way to Calvary (Luke 23:27-31), women at the crucifixion (Luke 23:49), women at the burial (Luke 23:55-56a), women at the tomb (Luke 24:1-12) and women who witness that Jesus is the one who forgives sins (Luke 24:13-56).

The stories about women are critical as they present a narrative that confronts the symbolic universe of Temple and temple system, purity and exclusivity, to reveal a God who becomes present with the outsider and creates community with all who come in faith to Jesus. Through his narrative Luke creates a new symbolic universe anchored in Jesus, not Temple, and symbolised by the institution of household. Jesus is the one who provides the continuity with God's presence in Temple and Scriptures. Jesus claims the anticipations of Israel, and is portrayed as the one in whom God is present.

## CHAPTER 5: WOMEN IN THE BIRTH NARRATIVE

Luke has written a narrative that is prefaced by the story of Jesus' birth (Luke 1:5-2:51). The opening chapters of Luke's gospel highlight both the initiative of God to honour God's promises of salvation to the people of Israel and the importance of the human response of faith through which the promises of God are realised in human history. While both Luke and Matthew include a birth narrative, Luke is unique in that the promise of God's salvation is engaged through Mary's response of faith. In Luke's gospel God's announcement of Jesus' birth is made to Mary not Joseph, as is the case in Matthew.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, Luke depicts parallel scenes in which Zechariah

<sup>235</sup> Both Luke and Matthew have included the announcement of Jesus' birth and the narrative of his infancy in their gospels (Luke 1:5-2:52 and Matt 1:18-2:12). Luke's account places Mary at the centre of the story while Joseph assumes prominence in the Matthean account. There are significant differences between the two accounts as summarised below.

	<b>Luke</b>	<b>Matthew</b>
Angelic announcement about Jesus' birth	Came to Mary	Came to Joseph
Genealogy	Luke's genealogy deferred till Chapter 3	Includes genealogy in birth and infancy narrative
Social and historical setting	Includes shepherds, presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Simeon, Anna, the Magnificat, Benedictus and finding Jesus in the Temple	Includes reference to Magi, flight to Egypt, massacre of innocents, return from Egypt
Census of Quirinius	Jesus born in Bethlehem because Mary and Joseph responding to the census of Quirinius	Knows nothing of the census of Quirinius

The two independent accounts also share a number of common points. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the reign of King Herod. Jesus' mother, named Mary, was a virgin betrothed to a man, named Joseph, from the line of David. Conception was connected with the Holy Spirit and the name Jesus is given by the angel. However, there are a number of points distinctive to Luke. Luke has clearly portrayed Mary as recipient of God's announcement of the birth of the Saviour. Luke has also included Elizabeth and the story of the birth of John the Baptist in the narrative and has highlighted the role of the Temple and the setting of the gospel in the midst of Jewish piety. God's presence and purpose is revealed by the angel who appears to

fails to respond in faith to the announcement of God's word while Mary and Elizabeth, two women, play key roles in demonstrating faith and pronouncing blessing.

Luke locates the narratives of the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus both within the world of Judaism and within the historical and geographical context of the first century Mediterranean world. The story of Jesus' birth continues the ongoing story of God's initiative of salvation as told through the Old Testament Scriptures. Luke immerses the reader in the world of Judaism as the birth narratives push the beginnings of the Lucan narrative from the present to the past. God's purpose and promise of salvation, as seen through the Old Testament scriptures, is brought into present focus through the stories of the announcement and birth of John the Baptist and Jesus.<sup>236</sup> A comparison of the Abrahamic material from Gen 11-21 with the account in Luke 1:4-2:52 provides an example of the way in which Luke has used the Old Testament scriptures to provide a framework within which the stories of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus can be interpreted.<sup>237</sup> The visit of the angel

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Zechariah, to Mary and to the shepherds. See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 307-308. CF Evans *Saint Luke: New Testament Commentaries* (London: SCM, 1990) 138. Tannehill *Luke* 41, 42. Raymond Brown *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1977) 34, 35. Marshall *Luke* 45.

<sup>236</sup> Green *Luke* 52. 'Luke self consciously begins his narrative in the middle of the story ... The God who has been working redemptively still is, now, and especially in Jesus. See also Mark Coleridge *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative as Christology in Luke 1-2 JSNTSS* 88 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 30-35. 'The first two chapters of the Lukan narrative will understand the events they recount as fulfilment of past promises.'

<sup>237</sup> Green *Luke* 52-57 has provided a close comparison of the two passages. He notes that both narratives share elements in common with conventional forms found in biblical tradition. In the birth narratives Luke has drawn upon both an annunciation form or type scene and a conventional commissioning form. Green notes linguistic similarities between the two passages and that the Abraham story is explicitly referred to on two occasions in Luke's

Gabriel (Luke 1:11-20, 26-38), familiar from Dan 8:16ff and 9:21ff, draws on the use of apocalyptic texts that announce end time events. According to Brown 'there can be no doubt that in his description of Gabriel's appearance Luke intends to evoke the atmosphere of Daniel'.<sup>238</sup>

The Lucan narrative is also located within the first century Roman world. The gospel opens in the reign of Herod, King of Judea (Luke 1:5).<sup>239</sup> In Luke 2:1-2 we are told of

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canticles (Luke 1:55, 73). Green comments further that 'Luke regards his opening chapters as though they were the continuation of the story rooted in the Abrahamic covenant.' See also Brown *Birth* 268-269 who suggests similarities between 1 Sam1:1 and Luke 1:5. He identifies some parallels between John the Baptist and Samuel and between Elizabeth/Zechariah and Hannah/Elkanah. Brown also notes clear similarities between Elizabeth/Zechariah and Abraham/Sarah from the Genesis account. See also additional comments in Fitzmyer *Luke* 317, 321, 323. Nolland *Luke* 18 comments that the Lukan annunciation accounts in particular show a heavy dependence on Old Testament prototypes, especially Judges 13:2-7 and 1 Sam 1-3. Tannehill *Luke* 39 comments on Luke's use of scripture.

<sup>238</sup> Brown *Birth* 270. The theme of the 70 weeks of years (Dan 9:24-27) serves as a background for the annunciation by Gabriel to Zechariah in Luke's gospel. For Daniel the end of the 70 weeks of years is the time when 'everlasting justice will be introduced, vision and prophecy will be ratified, and a Holy of Holies will be anointed'. Luke thinks that the last times have come. The eschatological atmosphere of Daniel is echoed in the message of Gabriel to Zechariah. See also Nolland *Luke* 19. Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 42 endorses the same point 'But that it is the eschatological messenger from the book of Daniel also underlines the fact that the promise of salvation is coming now to its fulfilment.'

<sup>239</sup> Brown *Birth* 257. Noted that technically Herod was king over all Palestine, not only Judea. See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 320 who comments that Luke's dating of the birth of John and of Jesus in Palestinian history 'remains vague at this point'. ' "In the days of Herod" could refer to any time between 37 BC and 4 BC'. It only becomes more specific 'when located in reference to the census under Quirinius'. However, this also raises other problems in terms of the dating of the birth of Jesus. Herod the Great died in 4 BC and Quirinius did not start his legateship of Syria until 6 CE. Fitzmyer *Luke* 402-405 addresses this problem and notes a range of attempts to resolve the issue. In particular he cites the more recent work of two experts in Roman history and law, AN. Sherwin-White and R Syme. Sherwin-White claims that 'Luke dated the

the census of Caesar Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Further, in Luke 3:1 Luke refers to the time of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee.<sup>240</sup>

Through the narrative Luke shows God to be present and involved in this history. The epiphanies (Luke 1:11-19, 26-38 and 2:9-14) express God's initiative. In Luke 1:11 Luke introduces 'an angel of the Lord', a term from the Scriptures which strengthens the notion of God's presence.<sup>241</sup> In Luke 1:19 we are told that the angel is Gabriel, sent with divine authority. In Luke 1:26, 27, in the epiphany to Mary, we are introduced directly to the angel Gabriel who, we are told, 'was sent from God to a

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birth of Jesus to the census of Quirinius (AD 6)' as a 'deliberate rejection of the tradition of Matthew which connects the nativity with Herod and Archelaus'. Alternatively, according to Syme, the solution is rather to be sought in the vagueness of recollection of the two important events in the history of Palestinian Jews: the end of Herod in 4 BC and the annexation of Judea in 6 CE. Fitzmyer notes that 'Syme's solution is the one to be preferred'.

<sup>240</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 399. Brown *Birth* 394. Octavian, the greatnephew of Julius Caesar, was given the title Augustus by the Senate and people in 27 BCE. He died in 14 AD having designated Tiberius, a stepson, as his successor (Luke 3:1). It was in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar that Jesus began his ministry. Quirinius was made a legate of Syria in 6 CE and was specially charged with restructuring Judea as a Roman province after the deposing of Archelaus, Herod the Great's son, who had ruled from 4 BC to AD 6. See also Green *Luke* 50 who comments that Luke's specific references - chronological, geographical, geo-political and topographical - provide a concrete representation of the world in which these stories are set.

<sup>241</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 35 writes 'The narrator composes the angel's speech as a tapestry of either citations or echoes of the entire OT, with Torah, Prophets, and writings all finding their place, (Gen 16:11-16; 17:19; Num 6:3; Lev 10:9; Judg 13:4; 2 Kings 2:9-10; 1 Sam 1:11; Dan 10:12; Mal 2:6; 3:1, 24 and Sir 48:10). Green *Luke* 71-72 also comments 'The motif of God's presence is furthered by Luke's introduction of an angel of the Lord, using phraseology familiar from the OT, (Gen 16:7; Ex 3:2; Judg 6:11, 12).

city named Nazareth'.<sup>242</sup> The angel Gabriel comes to announce the birth of John and of Jesus, and to make known the good news of Jesus' birth. The first epiphany (Luke 1:11-19) to Zechariah takes place in the in the Temple. According to Squires it introduces 'the prediction that Elizabeth, despite her advanced years (1:18) will conceive a son (1:13), whilst the epiphany to Mary (1:26-38) predicts that despite her virginity (1:27) and lack of husband (1:34) she also will bear a son'.<sup>243</sup> In both instances the Holy Spirit is at work through the events being announced (Luke 1:15, 35). 'Through Elizabeth's pregnancy God has removed her reproach of barrenness and through the pregnancy of Mary, we see that with God nothing is impossible.'<sup>244</sup>

The epiphanies follow a scriptural annunciation pattern. By patterning the announcement of Jesus' birth on the Old Testament birth announcement Luke makes it clear that in the event of Jesus' birth God is at work in human history. Brown presents a five-step birth annunciation form.<sup>245</sup> Fitzmyer agrees that the Lucan passages follow this form.<sup>246</sup> Green calls for a less elaborate structure.<sup>247</sup> Some scholars, while agreeing that Lucan annunciations and birth scenes follow the more

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<sup>242</sup> See footnote 240 above describing Gabriel as 'the eschatological messenger from the book of Daniel'.

<sup>243</sup> Squires *Plan of God* 28.

<sup>244</sup> Squires *Plan of God* 28. Note also the third epiphany (Luke 2:9-14) includes the angelic appearance to the shepherds announcing the birth of the Saviour (Luke 2:9) followed by the appearance of a choir of heavenly angels to announce peace and God's good pleasure (Luke 2:14). These angelic epiphanies indicate God's providential control. The plan of God will be accomplished irrespective of human response.

<sup>245</sup> See Brown *Birth* 156.

<sup>246</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 318.

<sup>247</sup> Green *Luke* 53. Green argues for an annunciation form that includes three elements: Announcement of Birth, Name of Child and Future of Child.

general conventional annunciation-type scene, raise various questions.<sup>248</sup> Others have held that Luke's revision reflects more a conventional commissioning form where the focus of the narrative would then fall on the recipients of the message, Zechariah, Mary and the shepherds, and their roles in the realisation of God's purpose rather than in the future of the child.<sup>249</sup> In summary Green comments that 'even though the Lucan material lacks the commission-orientated language typical of commission scenes, Luke's point here seems to be that miraculous, redemptive activity of God calls forth human response and partnership.'<sup>250</sup> While the birth annunciations in Luke's gospel may be seen to follow the annunciation form proposed by Brown, it is the narrative of God's visitation, calling forth the human response of faith, that sets the stage for how and with whom God becomes present in human history.

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<sup>248</sup> Janice Capel Anderson 'Mary's Difference: Gender and Patriarchy in the Birth Narratives' *JR* 67 (1987) 193 'This type scene includes (a) "the plight of barrenness of the future mother of the hero" (b)"the annunciation to the barren women (or in a few cases to the father) enacted through the promise or prediction of an oracle, a visiting man of God, or an angel" and (c) conception and birth of a son'. Anderson states that this convention indicates that 'there is something supernatural or extraordinary about the birth of a hero, foreshadowing his future role'. See also EW Conrad 'The Annunciation of Birth and the Birth of the Messiah' *CBQ* 47 (1985) 656-663 where he concludes that 'the rather complex form that Brown analyses as "Biblical Annunciation of Birth" is open to question. NT tradition appears to have created a model from OT texts where the relevant material was more complex and scattered than Brown suggests'. Cf. Brown *Birth* 662.

<sup>249</sup> See Raymond E Brown 'Gospel Infancy Narrative Research from 1976-1986: Part II (Luke)' *CBQ* 48 (1986) 660-680. Tannehill *Luke* 43 who, citing the work of Benjamin Hubbard, claims that his analysis of commissioning stories fits both Luke 1:5-25 and 26-38. He further comments that 'In the Lukan scenes however, the commission includes an announcement of birth, thus making the scenes similar to stories cited by Raymond Brown, and applying the commission aspect not to the parent primarily but primarily to the promised child.'

<sup>250</sup> Green *Luke* 56.

The first epiphany, the story of the annunciation of the birth of John (Luke 1:5-23), opens with an introduction of the parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth. This introduction frames the story within the framework of Old Testament Judaism. Zechariah is a priest, from a priestly family of the division of Abijah (Luke 1:5).<sup>251</sup> Elizabeth, his wife, is from the priestly family of Aaron. Luke introduces both Elizabeth and Zechariah as characters of equal importance.<sup>252</sup> He portrays them both as upright and blameless, conforming absolutely to the will of God.<sup>253</sup> Zechariah and Elizabeth's 'priestly origins and purity, measures of status in Jewish society, have clearly been kept inviolate.'<sup>254</sup> However, Zechariah and Elizabeth were childless, and

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<sup>251</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 322. Marshall *Luke* 53. Jeremias *Jerusalem* 198-207. The division of Abijah was one of the divisions that did not return to serve in the Jerusalem Temple after the Babylonian captivity, but served twice a year for a week at a time.

<sup>252</sup> Barbara E Reid *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke* (Minnesota: Liturgical, 1996) 57. Luke tells us her name. This is significant as many biblical women are left unnamed, or just identified as wife, mother or daughter. Every statement made of Zechariah is matched by what Luke says of Elizabeth. The priestly lineage and the names of both are given (Luke 1:5). Both are righteous before God, both are childless, and both are getting on in years.

<sup>253</sup> Reid *Choosing* 58. Elizabeth is said to be righteous (*dikaïos*). In the scriptures this adjective is rarely used to describe a woman. In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible *dikaïos* is frequently used to describe God (Ps 7:12; 114:5; Is 45:21; Jer 12:1; Dan 9:14; 2 Chr 12:6). Individuals said to be upright include Noah (Gen 6:9); Job (Job 1:1); Daniel (4 Macc 16:21); Ishbaal, the son of Saul (2 Sam 4:11); and the servant of God (Isa 53:11). The only woman is Tamar (Gen 38:26). In the New Testament God is upright (Rom 3:26; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 John 1:9) and is addressed as Righteous Father by Jesus (John 17:25). Individuals said to be righteous in the New Testament include Joseph (Matt 1:19); John the Baptist (Mark 6:20); Simeon (Luke 2:25); Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50); Cornelius (Acts 10:22); Abel (Heb 11:4; 1 John 3:12) and Lot (2 Pet 2:7). Elizabeth is the only woman to whom the term is applied. This is significant in the light of the way Luke uses the term in respect of Jesus. Luke has changed Mark's declaration at the cross that 'Truly this man was the Son of God' (Mark 15:39) to 'Certainly this man was innocent' (Luke 23:47).

<sup>254</sup> Joel B Green 'The Social Status of Mary in Luke 1:5-2:52: A plea for Methodological Integration' *Biblica* 73 (1992) 462 n17.

Elizabeth was past child-bearing age. To be childless within Judaism was a disgrace, a great misfortune, a sign of divine punishment and a source of shame.<sup>255</sup> In the Lucan narrative Zechariah and Elizabeth are placed within the tradition of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 16:1), Isaac and Rebecca (Gen 25:21), Jacob and Rachael (Gen 30:1).<sup>256</sup>

The world of Old Testament Judaism is focused in the Temple as Zechariah, the priest, takes his place in the temple cult and, according to the custom, wins the lot to burn incense.<sup>257</sup> With Zechariah, alone, at the altar of incense, Luke takes the story of

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<sup>255</sup> Reid *Choosing* 59. Reid claims that, by saying that, as Elizabeth was 'observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly', it is clear that her childlessness is not a punishment for sin. However, Luke does assert that Elizabeth's barrenness is the cause for their childlessness. See also Loretta Dornisch *A Woman Reads the Gospel of Luke* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 16. Dornisch comments on the irony of a father, a priest and life-giver who has fathered no child, and a woman who is Elizabeth, a name that means house of life of the Lord - a 'pregnant woman' is sterile! Both Elizabeth and Zechariah are past child-bearing age, and if in the narrative they are types of Israel, then 'we also have a telling commentary on the lack of fruitfulness of Israel.'

<sup>256</sup> See Green *Luke* 66. The narration of barrenness itself becomes grounds for anticipating the gift of a child. See also Marshall *Luke* 53.

<sup>257</sup> See Luke 1:9 'it fell to him by lot to enter the Temple of the Lord and burn incense.' Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 33 note 2. 'Winning the lot was a special event in the life of the priest. However, once he had won the right the priest then became ineligible for service until all the other priests of his division had taken their turn. This meant that a priest would have only one turn in his life'. Green *Luke* 68. 'Each order of priests would serve at the Temple on a rotating basis during two separate weeks each year'. 'The daily routine at the Temple included burning incense before the morning and after the evening sacrifices'. 'The honour given to burning the incense is seen by its location in the Holy place or sanctuary' - only the Holy of Holies was more important, more holy. Five priests were involved in burning the incense, and 'following the burning of incense those priests would stand on the steps of the porch and bless the people, using the words of Num 6:24-26'.

God's visitation into the Holy place, the sanctuary.<sup>258</sup> Through the appearance of the 'angel of the Lord' Luke interrupts Zechariah.<sup>259</sup> The cultic action is never narrated and the priestly blessing is never given.<sup>260</sup> Through the narrative Luke carefully locates the priest, Zechariah, and the angelic visitation, in the sanctuary, but does not link the visitation of God to the cultic priestly action. According to Coleridge 'The cultic action is never narrated since, as the narrator has it, it is not through the temple cult that God visits his people.'<sup>261</sup>

Zechariah, the priest, fails to recognise the moment of divine visitation and does not believe the words of the one sent from God. He responds by interrupting the angel (Luke 1:18), asking how he will know the truth of what he was being told. While these are the words of the question of Abraham (Gen 15:8) there are two critical differences: Zechariah's lack of faith and Zechariah's lack of memory.<sup>262</sup> Firstly,

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<sup>258</sup> Outside was 'the whole multitude of the people' (Luke 1:10). Symbolically in the narrative these people represent Israel, the chosen people of God whom they make present in the Temple, but removed from the sanctuary. See Nolland *Luke* 28. The presence of the praying crowd suggests that evening offering time is in view. Luke uses *laos* for the historic people of God. Here faithful Israel is pictured at worship.

<sup>259</sup> Green *Luke* 71. The sanctuary was holy space, sacred space connecting and supporting heaven and earth. The Temple was the place where God spoke – as here through an angel.

<sup>260</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 33. 'Not only is the burning of incense never narrated, but neither is the priestly blessing which normally brought the rite to a conclusion'. Coleridge claims that the non-narration of the priestly blessing in Luke 1:5-25 is due to the transcendence of the Temple cult within the episode itself. But see Fitzmyer *Luke* 1590. Brown *Birth* 280. Nolland *Luke* 33. They suggest that the blessing Zechariah was unable to give when he left the Temple was given by Jesus in Luke 24:50. But against this see Marshall *Luke* 909. The idea of priest does not play any role in Luke.

<sup>261</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 33.

<sup>262</sup> Zechariah is a priest and Abraham is not. Abraham was the first in a line of Old Testament childless figures and Zechariah is the last. Abraham put his faith in God before he asked the

Zechariah fails to recognise God and God's messenger and asks for more knowledge, a sign. Secondly, Zechariah fails to remember the biblical tradition of the faith of Abraham. He, therefore, fails to interpret correctly the present initiative of God and asks for a sign. Zechariah is struck dumb. The sign given to him is that of silence.<sup>263</sup>

Although Elizabeth did not experience directly the angelic appearance, her interpretation of the sign of God's visitation is in contrast to Zechariah's response of unbelief. The narrative moves from the Temple to the private home of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:23). The promise, made to Zechariah, finds fulfilment as Elizabeth finds herself to be pregnant. She, in contrast to Zechariah, understands this to be an expression of the compassion of God and interprets her pregnancy in the light of Old Testament precedence.<sup>264</sup> Elizabeth, in contrast to Zechariah, recognises God's grace. It is Elizabeth who announces her pregnancy as the gift of God. 'Thus the Lord has done to me in these days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.' (Luke 1:25)<sup>265</sup>

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question (Gen 15:6), Zechariah did not. See Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 38 for a longer list and discussion of the subject.

<sup>263</sup> The Lucan story moves from inside the sanctuary to the outside where the people had been praying. We are told that the people wondered at the delay (Luke 1:21). They knew something had happened in the sanctuary. When Zechariah emerged unable to speak, on the basis of past knowledge and understanding, the people judge that Zechariah had seen a vision. The people are left with not enough knowledge to make a faith decision and they interpret wrongly the sign of Zechariah's silence.

<sup>264</sup> Sarah (Gen 21:1); Rachael (Gen 30:23).

<sup>265</sup> Reid *Choosing* 61. In every instance of interior dialogue in the gospel of Luke, the speakers articulate mistaken or misguided judgements. Elizabeth is unique in making a theological statement in what she says to herself.

The Lucan narrative places the response of a woman, in the home, in apposition to the response of a priest in the Temple sanctuary. Elizabeth's response of faith sharply contrasts with Zechariah's response of unbelief. Luke positions the narrative in the world of Judaism, in the Temple sanctuary. Yet through the moment of Gabriel's appearance and through not narrating the cultic rite the Lucan narrative moves the place of God's initiative beyond the temple cult. The failure of the temple system is seen, as the priest Zechariah, mute, is unable to pronounce the priestly blessing on the people. Human recognition and response to divine presence is no longer contained within the temple cult of Old Testament Judaism.

In the second epiphany Gabriel appears to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). The second scene of annunciation is closely aligned with the first. However, it is through its apparent similarity but significant difference that Luke continues his narrative of human response in the light of divine visitation.<sup>266</sup> Although there are contrasts in form and language between these two passages, the contrast to be explored in this thesis is the contrast between the characters Zechariah and Mary.

While the angelic appearance to Zechariah came in the Temple, the centre of Old Testament Judaism, Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth, a town with no Old

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<sup>266</sup> There is a range of opinion about the relationship between the structure of the two passages. See Fitzmyer *Luke* 334 'the second episode is parallel to the first' and 313 for further discussion. Brown *Birth* 295-297 whose comparison sees some differences. Nolland *Luke* 40-41 lists parallels and step parallelisms. His second qualification has to do with the form of the second annunciation that he claims has been modified in the direction of a call narrative. Marshall *Luke* 62. Green *Luke* 83. 'Both in *language* and *form* vv5-23 and vv26-38 are set in parallel'. But also 'the points of contrast between the two scenes are equally telling.'

Testament expectations, as a sign of the total newness of what God was doing.<sup>267</sup> Nazareth was a city of Galilee, a relatively unknown town, sufficiently distant, despised and racially mixed that it could be called 'Galilee of the Gentiles'.<sup>268</sup> Mary is introduced as a girl of marriageable age, a virgin, who is betrothed to a man, named Joseph, of the house of David.<sup>269</sup> Elizabeth and Zechariah are old and childless. Elizabeth is disgraced.<sup>270</sup> Elizabeth and Zechariah come from highly respected priestly families. Mary's family is not mentioned. She stands alone. She is given no status or position or honour. She has not yet entered the family of Joseph - she is still under the control of her own father who in the narrative is absent.<sup>271</sup> On the strength of this Mary is depicted as someone quite insignificant. Yet she is greeted by the

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<sup>267</sup> Brown *Birth* 314.

<sup>268</sup> Cf. 1 Macc 5:15; Isa 9:1.

<sup>269</sup> Green 'Social Status of Mary' 464. Ilan *Jewish Women* 98. In the first century Jewish world, innocence and purity are associated with the person who is described as a virgin. See also Seim *Double Message* 204. 'Mary's virginity is seen as a positive condition: instead of being a hindrance and a moral problem, it becomes an expression of election by grace. Virginity is established in the initial phase of the gospel as a positive quality that is pleasing to God with creative possibilities for God's Spirit.'

<sup>270</sup> Seim *Double Message* 200. Elizabeth and Zechariah are true to type. They confirm that complete fulfilment of a woman's life come by giving birth in marriage. The story of Mary breaks the pattern. Virginity is not included in the established variations of the literary convention. Childlessness means sorrow and shame and pregnancy removes this disgrace; the opposite is true of the virgin. What is more disgraceful than a premature pregnancy for one who ought to preserve her virginity until consummation in marriage?

<sup>271</sup> Green 'Social Status of Mary' 465. Outlining the Jewish practice of betrothal and marriage, Green draws attention to the practice of betrothal as the drawing up of a deed and the exchange of money - the bride price, followed some 12 months later by marriage - sexual intercourse. Hence in the case of Mary betrothed to Joseph, the bride price would have been paid and Mary legally joined to Joseph, in that she would need a divorce for separation. However, until the marriage itself she would still be living in the house of her father, and under his control. Her status would still derive from him.

angel Gabriel with 'Hail (or rejoice), favoured one, the Lord is with you' (Luke 1:28).<sup>272</sup> This greeting, although ambiguous, denotes reassurance of divine favour.

Mary makes three responses to the angel Gabriel, leading to an expression of faith in the word of God.<sup>273</sup> Zechariah's responses demonstrate lack of faith. Mary's response in Luke 1:29 can be compared with Zechariah's response in Luke 1:12. Zechariah is alarmed at what he saw. Mary is alarmed at what she heard.<sup>274</sup> In Luke 1:12 'fear' fell upon Zechariah but Luke 1:29 refers to puzzlement, suggesting that Mary's reaction is less a reaction to a theophany than a need for clarification.<sup>275</sup> While Mary's next question in Luke 1:34 has been compared with Zechariah's question in Luke 1:18 there is no agreement among critics as to whether these two questions (Luke 1:34 and

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<sup>272</sup> Reid *Choosing* 66. The expression 'favoured one' (*kercharitomene*) is unique in the New Testament. In the Old Testament 'to find favour' was a frequent expression and includes Noah (Gen 6:8), Moses (Ex 33:12-17), Gideon (Judg 6:17) and Samuel (1 Sam 2:26). In the New Testament Jesus is also 'favoured one' (*charis*) (Luke 2:40, 52 and 4:22). See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 344-245. Marshall *Luke* 65. They claim *xai=re* is best understood as Greek salutation and should be translated hail. See also Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 55 note 1 for discussion of greeting. Alternatively see Nolland *Luke* 87 who says 'many translations read the initial word as a common greeting rather than an invitation to rejoice.'

<sup>273</sup> In Luke 1:29 Mary is troubled or alarmed in response to Gabriel's greeting, in Luke 1:34 Mary seeks additional information, and in Luke 1:38 Mary makes her submission of faith.

<sup>274</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 56 explains that in the Mary episode there is very little visual detail, unlike that of Zechariah. We are not told where they met, what Mary was doing when Zechariah arrived, and whether Mary ever sees Gabriel. 'In a story of doubt the narration is in visual mode, with Zechariah startled by the vision, demanding a sign, becoming wordless and strongly visualised in the narrative.' 'Now in a story of faith the narration moves to aural mode.'

<sup>275</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 346 who thinks that Mary's trouble could have come from 'the realisation that she, a woman, was being greeted by someone not a woman.' But Reid *Choosing* writes that 'in biblical stories of angelic apparitions fear or prostration is the standard reaction of

Luke 1:18) are identical, similar or totally unlike.<sup>276</sup> The more correct comparison may well be found between the question in Luke 1:18 and Luke 1:38 where Mary's response of faith to the divine message is found.<sup>277</sup> In Mary's response in Luke 1:38 we find a fundamental statement about the nature of faith.<sup>278</sup>

Through faith Mary is shown to be the prime human collaborator with God.<sup>279</sup> In describing herself as the Lord's servant (cf. Luke 1:48) she acknowledges both her submission to God's purpose and her role in assisting that purpose. Furthermore, in describing herself to be a servant of the Lord she claims a place in God's household.

'She who has been given no family heritage by the narrator now affirms her place in God's family. God's favour and election are the only indicators of status that have been given to Mary.' ... 'When Mary asserts her position as the servant of the Lord, we recognise that she derives her status from God, and so Luke is now initiating his

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those to whom a heavenly messenger comes.' (Gen 18:2; Num 22:31; Josh 5:14; Judg 13:20, 22; 1 Chr 21:16; 2 Macc 3:27.)

<sup>276</sup> Brown *Birth* 280 notes that Zechariah's question is not noticeably different from the objection Mary will pose in Luke 1:34. Green *Luke* 89. 'It is not immediately clear how the objections of Zechariah and Mary differ, even if it is certain that the angel can distinguish one from the other.' Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 63-64.

<sup>277</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 69 when Mary speaks her submission, the narrative finds its dramatic equivalent to Zechariah's question in Luke 1:18.

<sup>278</sup> Zechariah saw himself as the beneficiary of the divine plan, Mary sees herself as its servant. Zechariah sought to retain the initiative, Mary surrenders the initiative to God, and where Zechariah had questioned the messenger, Mary believed on the basis of what she knew.

<sup>279</sup> Mary's role is both passive and active in relationship to the divine plan. On the one hand Gabriel's message is all about the plan of God, which will be achieved whether Mary believes or not, and yet it is also about Mary's response and collaboration with God's initiative which is shown through the question in Luke 1:34. Again Gabriel waits for Mary's reply in Luke 1:38.

representation of a community of God's people whose fundamental social experience is grounded in their relationship to God.'<sup>280</sup>

In the scene following the two epiphanies (Luke 1:39-45) Luke brings together two women: Mary who had expressed faith in the word of God and Elizabeth who had interpreted correctly the sign given to Zechariah. This scene is set inside the house, in the private sphere of women. Joseph is absent. Zechariah is mute and plays no part. The two women meet and theologise about their experiences and understanding of God's visitation. According to Reid 'This scene brings together and preserves a rare biblical vignette of a conversation between two women.'<sup>281</sup>

Mary's faith, her response to God's visitation, dominates the first segment of the episode (Luke 1:39-40). Having risen, Mary goes with haste, enters the house of Zechariah and greets Elizabeth.<sup>282</sup> The narrative implies that Mary consults no one, gains no approval for the journey, and travels alone. This, according to custom, would be highly improper.<sup>283</sup> While the narrative does not tell us explicitly why Mary makes the journey there is a range of opinion among scholars.<sup>284</sup> Coleridge,

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<sup>280</sup> Green 'Social Status of Mary' 468.

<sup>281</sup> Reid *Choosing* 70.

<sup>282</sup> Reid *Choosing* 70. Mary's journey, according to Luke's arrangement is from Nazareth to the hill country near Jerusalem, a distance of slightly more than 100 miles. Such a trip would take the better part of a week or two. See also Brown *Birth* 332.

<sup>283</sup> See Chapter 4 of this thesis. See also comments in Green *Luke* 94-95.

<sup>284</sup> Brown *Birth* 341. According to Brown the visit comes as a divine imperative. The annunciation of Jesus' birth concluded with the angel giving Mary a sign based on Elizabeth's pregnancy, now in its sixth month. Gabriel's words 'Nothing said by God can be impossible' were an implicit directive to Mary, with the result that the visit comes as a divine imperative. Contrary to that Green *Luke* 95. 'Mary's journey is apparently unmotivated. She does not go in obedience to the angel, who gave her no such instructions'. Green also comments that the

however, rejects attempts to discern why Mary might have made the trip and argues from a narrative perspective that she is driven by faith.<sup>285</sup> Luke also places great emphasis on Mary's greeting when she reaches the house of Zechariah. Again, we are not given the content of the greeting but Luke mentions the fact of it three times (Luke 1:40, 41, 44). Its primary significance in the narrative appears to be its effect. Mary's greeting stirs Elizabeth's response: the child leaps in her womb,<sup>286</sup> Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and blesses Mary (Luke 1:41, 44).

Elizabeth speaks on behalf of God. 'Filled with the Holy Spirit', she offers two blessings.<sup>287</sup> In her first blessing Elizabeth affirms God's blessing for Mary, 'blessed are you among women' and 'blessed is the fruit of her womb' (Luke 1:42). Mary is

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trip could well be theologically motivated given Luke's use of the word *poreu/omai*. *Poreu/omai* plays a significant theological role in the Lucan narrative to connote 'journey', a going related to the fulfilment of the divine purpose (see Luke 9:51). Fitzmyer *Luke* 357 claims that Mary knows about Elizabeth's condition because of the angel's declaration to her (Luke 1:36) and this is why she goes to Elizabeth.

<sup>285</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 78. The narrator has supplied the information that the two women are blood relatives as a motive for the journey. At the level of external circumstance that is enough. Arguing from a narrative perspective Coleridge claims that, while in the first two episodes heaven's initiative set the action in motion now, in this episode Mary's faith (human response to heaven's initiative) drives the action. Coleridge also claims that from the narrative perspective, although it is usually assumed that Mary is pregnant at this point, the narrator in fact says nothing that would allow a conclusive judgement. This allows the accent of the narration to fall instead on Mary and God.

<sup>286</sup> It is usually presumed that John leaps joyfully at the presence of the Messiah whom Mary carries in her womb. See Brown *Birth* 365. Green *Luke* 95. Nolland *Luke* 66 'while Elizabeth responds to the greeting, the unborn John responds directly to the presence of the unborn Jesus'. Fitzmyer *Luke* 363. The unborn child is thus made to acknowledge not only 'the Lord' but also the presence of 'mother of my Lord'. But see Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 81. Coleridge, however, argues that it is not the presence of Jesus, but rather the presence of Mary, the believer, that stirs John in the womb.

blessed initially as a woman in her own right and then for child bearing. Following in Elizabeth's speech she refers to her understanding of Mary as 'the mother of my Lord' (Luke 1:43). In this realisation Elizabeth is moving past seeing Mary's unborn baby merely in terms of his relationship to Mary (Mary's child) and God (the child of God's blessing and favour). She now proclaims him to be the Lord – tou= kuri/ou sou.<sup>288</sup> In Elizabeth's second blessing (Luke 1:45) Mary is recognised as a person of faith and as a recipient of divine fortune because of her faith. Elizabeth confirmed that what is taking place is 'a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord' (Luke 1:45).<sup>289</sup> In Luke 1:19-20 Gabriel chides Zechariah for doubt. In Luke 1:42b-45 Elizabeth acclaims Mary's faith.<sup>290</sup>

### **Summary**

Two women play an opening and significant role in this first chapter of Luke's gospel. Through God's favour Mary becomes the bearer of God's promise of salvation. Through Mary's faith she becomes the primary human collaborator with God. Elizabeth, the pious Jewish woman empowered by the Holy Spirit, pronounces the profound mystery of God's new beginning. With the two epiphanies dominating the chapter God's initiative is clearly seen. The narrative of God's visitation demonstrates that God is both fulfilling the long anticipated hope of Israel and at the same time 'discontinuing his arrangement with the Temple'. The household, private

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<sup>287</sup> Reid *Choosing* 72. See list of 'blessings' in Luke.

<sup>288</sup> Previously this was the term used of God and is used again of God in Luke 1:45. This is the first time Jesus has been given that title in Luke's gospel. In its use here Elizabeth is claiming the salvific significance for the whole people of God in the faith of Mary. See further Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 86.

<sup>289</sup> Green 'Social Status of Mary' 470. Squires *Plan of God* 29.

<sup>290</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 84.

women's space, becomes the place of interpretation of God's activity as, empowered by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth affirms the sign of God's new initiative.

In God's promise to Zechariah and his gift to Elizabeth we see the nature of God's initiative with the Jewish people. In the responses of Zechariah and Elizabeth we see the responses of the Jewish people to God's initiative. Luke constructs a narrative that clearly demonstrates that God's primary mode of communication is no longer through the temple cultic custom of the priests. The temple cult is interrupted by the angelic appearance, the rite is not narrated and the priestly blessing is not completed. Furthermore, Zechariah, the priest in the Temple, does not recognise the divine visitation. However, Elizabeth, representative of pious Jews anticipating the promise of God, rightly interprets her own pregnancy as the gracious gift of God, as in the case of Abraham and Sarah.<sup>291</sup> In the responses of Zechariah and Elizabeth we see the different responses of the Jewish people to God's initiative. Those associated with the Temple and temple system fail to recognise God's initiative as it comes in new ways. Others, pious Jews who have been anticipating the fulfilment of God's promises, see and welcome the new initiative of God.

Elizabeth not only understands but also interprets correctly her own pregnancy. Under the power of the Holy Spirit she also interprets God's favour to Mary and Mary's faith in God's promises. As a pious Jew, Elizabeth understands and welcomes the new initiative of God as the fulfilment of God's promise of old. God's disclosure is no longer with the male, perfectly credentialled and Temple-located priest, but

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<sup>291</sup> Zechariah too was to come to this understanding, but only after he left the Temple, went to his home and waited for the birth of his son, to be named John.

with a woman of no standing, from a place of no significance, and with one who has no opportunity to participate personally in the temple cult and custom.

Mary and Elizabeth show the nature of human collaboration in response to divine favour. Recognition of divine visitation, faith that the word spoken will find fulfilment, openness to the Holy Spirit, and correct interpretation of the signs of God's visitation now indicate a recognition and welcome of the plan of God in human history. In the first chapter of Luke's narrative this is located in the household and with two women, Mary and Elizabeth.

## CHAPTER 6: WIDOWS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

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The Lucan narrative introduces five widows: the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36-38); the widow at Zarephath (Luke 4:25-26); the widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17); the importunate widow (Luke 18:1-8) and the widow and the temple treasury (Luke 21:1-4). Of the five widows found in Luke's gospel only one, the widow and the temple treasury (Luke 21:1-4), finds a parallel in Mark and there are no parallels with Matthew.<sup>292</sup> Furthermore, much of the material in the New Testament referring to widows is found in the gospel of Luke.<sup>293</sup> Widows are important characters in Luke's narrative as they introduce the reader to the element of protest as characteristic both of God's initiative and of faithful human response. Through the stories of widows Luke continues his narrative of God's disclosure and human response.

Although widows were those with 'no voice' in Jewish society, God provided for them in a special way. In Jewish society widows were people with no place.<sup>294</sup> Economically, the widow was without a base. She was dependent on society, family or, in some instances, her son, to provide for her wellbeing. Widows were vulnerable.

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<sup>292</sup> Acts 6:1 mentions the widows of the Hellenists, widows appear in the account of the raising of Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42).

<sup>293</sup> Other references include 1 Cor 7:8, 39-40; James 1:27, Rev 18:7 and 1 Tim 5:3-16. Widows in the synoptic gospels include Mark 12:38-44. Bonnie Thurston *The Widows: A Women's Ministry in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 21 comments 'Outside the pastoral epistles, there is more material on the widows in Luke-Acts than anywhere else in the New Testament'.

They were on the 'outside' of Jewish society.<sup>295</sup> Remarriage was not encouraged and there was no provision made for widows outside the leverite tradition.<sup>296</sup> However, the widow, along with the orphan, the stranger and the fatherless, became people for whom God showed a special concern. The Old Testament scriptures speak of God as one who brings justice and deliverance to the weak.<sup>297</sup> Furthermore, the scriptures also require the people of God to show special consideration to those on the outside, including the widow, the fatherless and the sojourner. Just as God cares for the widow in a special way, so also God requires the people of God to show justice and

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<sup>294</sup> In Mediterranean society women needed to be under the care and protection of a male person. The place of women in society was given by the man to whom they were related. The widow, without a husband, had no representation in society. See Ilan *Jewish Women* 147-151.

<sup>295</sup> Thurston *Widows* 9. The Hebrew word for 'widow' is *almanah*, the root of which, *alem*, means 'unable to speak'. 'Thus, the widow was "the silent one"'. The Greek word for widow is *chera*. The root of the Greek means forsaken or left empty. 'The original meaning is a person 'without' or 'left without'. By New Testament times it was used to signify a woman left without a husband'. Widow can then mean a woman whose husband has died, but also a woman left without a husband. This could include 'anyone destitute, miserable, anyone who lived in solitude'. It could also mean a celibate woman. Frequently the term was used to describe financial status as well as marital status. In this case the 'widow is the one left without money or financial support'. See also Seim *Double Message* 232.

<sup>296</sup> Thurston *Widows* 13. The widow was to wait for a leverite marriage or refusal before she remarried outside the husband's family. Deut 25:5-10. See also Lev 21:14. Ruth 1:9, 13. Ezek 44:22. For remarriage outside the leverite tradition see 1 Sam 25. 2 Sam 11. But see also Seim *Double Message* 191-192. 'It was normal that the widow remarried at least twice if the opportunity offered itself.' Ilan *Jewish Women* 149. 'Widowhood in Judaism was in the most instances a temporary situation and the sources describe many cases of widows remarrying; there are only a very few cases of women remaining widows long after the deaths of their husbands.'

<sup>297</sup> God will 'hear their cry' (Ex 22:23; Deut 10:18; Ps 146:9). God will punish those who oppress them (Ex 22:24; Deut 27:19; Mal 3:5; Ps 94:6). God is the protector of the widows (Ps 68:5). God 'tears down the house of the proud, but maintains the widow's boundaries.' (Prov 15:25).

make provision for the widow.<sup>298</sup> The early Christian communities adopted this Jewish attitude of care and provision for those 'on the outside' and developed their own activities to support the widows.<sup>299</sup> While the lifestyle of the widow and the terms used and the meaning of the word 'widow' changed, and in the Christian community came to reflect a place of honour and perhaps social privilege, Luke retains the traditional understanding of widow as 'a bereaved woman'.<sup>300</sup>

### **Anna: Luke 2:36-38**

Anna (Luke 2:36-38) is depicted as a faithful Jewish widow. She provides a model of Jewish piety. Anna lives at the Temple and, as indicated in the Lucan narrative, is one of the devout, pious Jews anticipating God's redemption. Anna is presented as a widow, a vulnerable person; but she is also presented as a person of great strength. Luke depicts Anna as a person of protest and hope. Through the narrative we meet a prophetess who, by faith, sees and welcomes the plan of God in Jesus. Through

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<sup>298</sup> See Deut 14:29. 16:11, 14. 24:17-21. Fundamental to Israel's identity as God's people, whom God had redeemed from slavery, was the care they in turn were to show for others who had 'no place' - the fatherless, the orphan, the widow and the sojourner.

<sup>299</sup> Seim *Double Message* 234-236. Seim notes that this implies that 'the poor people who belonged to the group believing in Jesus did not (or could not) benefit from the public Jewish care.' There grew to be a large number of widows in the early Christian communities. Presumably the 'widow's material needs for support and the cultic community's obligation to care for her merged with ascetic ideals and a restrictive praxis of remarriage to an ideal of widowhood. The term 'widow' took on a note of honour', and 'life as a widow was not only desirable, but also feasible'. As the lifestyle of a widow became both desirable and possible within the Christian community, widows emerged as an independent group of women, accountable to no husband, father or male relative. Christians adopted the Roman term *univira*, a term conferring certain social prestige, and applied it to widows. 'The widow was a *univira* who had fulfilled the conventional expectations of a woman's life and at the same time could realise the ascetic ideals and lead a life consecrated to God'.

<sup>300</sup> Seim *Double Message* 248.

Anna's recognition and proclamation of the initiative of God in Jesus Christ Luke delegitimatises the Temple and temple system as the absolute means of communication between God and humanity. Through her recognition of Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of God's promise to Israel, the narrative calls into question the position and symbolism of the Jerusalem Temple and temple system as the primary means of communication between God and human beings.<sup>301</sup>

Luke paints a detailed personal picture of Anna's life and background (Luke 2:36-38).<sup>302</sup> We are told that she is a prophetess, the daughter of Phanual, from the tribe of Asher.<sup>303</sup> She is 'of a great age' (Luke 2:36), a reliable and mature figure, a widow. She had lived with one husband for seven years.<sup>304</sup> Since the death of her husband she spends her life in the Temple, worshipping God with fasting and praying, night

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<sup>301</sup> Walter Brueggemann *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 13. Brueggemann argues that 'the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness of the dominant culture around us.' Brueggemann claims that an alternative consciousness serves to criticise and delegitimise the dominant culture and energise persons and communities by the promise of another time and situation toward which the community of faith may move. Anna's prophetic ministry embodies this notion of both criticism/protest and the energising anticipation of the fulfilment of the promises of God's salvation.

<sup>302</sup> Reid *Choosing* 90. Anna's name is a feminine variation of John, from the Greek root meaning grace, or favour. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew Hannah. Anna is introduced following Simeon and together they provide an example of Luke's practice of pairing the story of a woman with that of a man. See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 430.

<sup>303</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 179. Coleridge notes that compared to Simeon the information given about Anna is 'strictly public knowledge'. The fact that she was immediately given the title prophetess suggests that hers was a public ministry.

<sup>304</sup> Reid *Choosing* 91. 'Seven being the biblical number for completeness or perfection this gives the image of being an ideal wife'.

and day.<sup>305</sup> Anna is portrayed as an exemplary widow, comparable to Judith.<sup>306</sup> She follows the precedent in the Jewish world of consecrated elderly women.<sup>307</sup> While some scholars have claimed that Anna is representative of widows in the Christian community,<sup>308</sup> Seim has argued against this, claiming that Anna is 'first and foremost an ascetic figure and that she implicitly represents a model for all young women'.<sup>309</sup>

Anna's key function in the Lucan narrative is that of prophetic proclamation.<sup>310</sup> She is devoted to worshipping God in the Temple.<sup>311</sup> However, her worship with fasting

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<sup>305</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 179. Again Coleridge claims that while Simeon comes from his private space to the public space of the Temple, Anna has no private space and inhabits the public space of the Temple.

<sup>306</sup> See also Judith 8:4-9:1. Judith, although not ascetic, was a female ideal figure in the pious imagination of the Maccabean period. After the death of her husband, Manasseh, she wore mourning for 3½ years and then never remarried. Her life was marked by fasting and prayer. Seim *Double Message* 192.

<sup>307</sup> Brown *Birth* 466-468. Brown states 'Luke intends that her widowhood devoted to worship, prayer and fasting should have its own eloquence, vocalising the ideals of the Anawim.'

<sup>308</sup> Brown *Birth* 467. The most detailed description of Christian widows is in 1 Tim 5:3-16, many features of which match Luke's description of Anna. Thurston *Widows* 24. 'Anna, a figure who serves as an example for later order of Christian widows.' Also Nolland *Luke* 122. Reid *Choosing* 93. 'Anna is a prototype of what would later develop into a clerical order of consecrated widows.'

<sup>309</sup> Seim *Double Message* 247. While there are some common elements between Anna and the true widows of 1 Tim 5:3-6, the similarity is much more limited than commonly supposed. She adds 'there is no trace in Luke of the criteria for the recognition of the true widows as we know them in 1 Tim 5:3-16.'

<sup>310</sup> She continues the line of women prophets from the Old Testament - Miriam (Ex 15:20; Deborah (Judg 4-5) and Huldah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chr 34:22). Reid *Choosing* 93-95. 'In Luke the voices of women prophets are never heard. Unlike Simeon, Anna's words of prophecy are not preserved.' Similarly the reader is given no indication of any reaction to her prophecy. Reid claims that Luke had set Anna, with Mary and Elizabeth in the mould of the prophetic women of Israel who belong to the age of promise. However, 'Christian women do not emulate the Jewish prophets. Rather he would have them assume a quiet, private stance that

and prayer, night and day (Luke 2:37), denotes both a protest and a hope that transcends the present situation. Fasting is a form of protest.<sup>312</sup> In spite of being a pious Jew who spends most of her time in the Temple, Anna declares that all is not in order. Her fast is in protest against the status quo, against the Temple and its system.<sup>313</sup> It is not offered in reaction or despair. In Anna's case her abstinence is an expression of her hope. Anna's protest is motivated by prayer and by the underlying anticipation that God will fulfil God's promise of salvation.

Anna's response to the child is prophetic.<sup>314</sup> In the narrative Anna, the prophetess, appears in the Temple at the right moment and correctly interprets the moment of God's promise (Luke 2:38). Anna recognises the significance of the child, perceiving in the baby Jesus the fulfilment of God's promises of redemption. Her prophetic response is one of praise to God. She makes known the coming of the Messiah to 'all

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he deems proper for women in the Greco-Roman world.' This is not necessarily true, as will be discussed when the widows in Luke 18:1-8 and Luke 21:1-4 are considered below. See further Chapter 9 of this thesis (Luke 24:8-10), where women are given the task of proclaiming Jesus' resurrection and, further, in Luke 24 where women are called with the men to be witnesses.

<sup>311</sup> Green *Luke* 151. The parallel clauses in Luke 2:37 'she never left the Temple' and 'but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day' indicate the importance of the Temple to the narrative.

<sup>312</sup> Jerome H Neyrey 'Ceremonies in Luke-Acts' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 375. When group members abstain from eating this can signal the shared support of community values.

<sup>313</sup> Green *Luke* 151. Green notes that in this situation it is of special significance as it is both a deliberate departure from cultural norms and particularly in Luke-Acts where meals were of such social significance.

<sup>314</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 181. Coleridge comments that as God's action grows more overt, the prophetic manifestations grow more public and more intense. It appears that

who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem' (Luke 2:38 cf. Isa 52:9).<sup>315</sup> According to the narrative Anna spread the news of the Messiah's coming beyond the bounds of family and, as implied by the narrative, to those beyond the physical confines of the Temple precincts.<sup>316</sup> Anna's prophecy to 'all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem' speaks of God's fulfilment of that promise in Jesus. Anna, a Jewish widow, whose life of protest and hope is centred in the midst of the Temple, recognises the fulfilment of Gods' promises, not in the Temple or temple cult, but in the birth of a child. She welcomes Jesus as the one sent by God for the salvation of all.

### **Widow of Zarephath and the Widow of Nain: Luke 4:25 and Luke 7:11-17**

Both the widow of Zaraphath (Luke 4:25) and the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) are cast in the role of the traditional widow. They are nameless, silent, in need and objects of compassion. The story of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17) provokes the compassion of Jesus and recalls the story of God's compassion for the widow of

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the new gift of prophecy that will come to full flower at Pentecost rises within the world of Jewish religion and its fulfilment.

<sup>315</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 179. When Anna speaks hers is public discourse rather than private discourse as in the case of Simeon. Anna speaks not just to the parents but to 'all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.' See also Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 182 who comments that it is difficult to know exactly to whom Anna speaks.

<sup>316</sup> Coleridge *Birth of the Lukan Narrative* 179. Coleridge notes the difference between the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:38) and the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25). He claims that the focus of Jerusalem is sharper than Israel. The mention of Jerusalem at this point establishes the narrative link between the proclamation of God's action in Jesus and the city itself. But note also Luke 13:34. Jerusalem will kill the one in whom its long awaited redemption comes. See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 432 who states that both terms are synonymous. Green *Luke* 152 sees one expression a synecdoche of the other. Nolland *Luke* 123 notes a parallel between the two verses Luke 2:25 and 2:38.

Zarephath (Luke 4:25 and 1 Kings 17:17-24). Compassion is the expression of protest that all is not well.<sup>317</sup> It is the expression of God (Jesus) on behalf of the widow.

Luke has Jesus refer to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17) as part of his programmatic opening in Luke 4:25.<sup>318</sup> By including God's compassion for the widow of Zarephath along with God's cleansing of the leper, Naaman the Syrian, Luke interprets his statement of 'good news to the poor'. The 'good news' brought by Jesus confronts the religious understanding of the synagogue congregation both by its declaration of God's freedom to act with compassion towards the outsider and also by its claim that in Jesus the scripture finds fulfilment.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Brueggemann *Prophetic Imagination* 85. Compassion constitutes a radical form of criticism, for it announces that hurt is to be taken seriously, that hurt is not to be accepted as normal and natural. The compassion of Jesus is to be understood not simply as personal emotional reaction but as public criticism in which he dares to act upon his concern against the entire numbness of his social context.

<sup>318</sup> In Luke 25-27 material from 1 Kings 17:25-27 (Elijah) is set beside material from 2 Kings 5:1-9 (Elisha). The pairing of a story of a man with that of a woman is characteristically Lucan. This is a key reference as it follows Jesus' polemical announcement that no prophet is received in their own country. In judgement of Israel who had turned to Baal, God sent a famine over Israel. During the period of the famine Elijah was sent by God to a widow - who was not just on the outside of established Jewish society, but was a non-Jew. Green *Luke* 218 'the role of Elijah and Elisha - and thus the exercise of God's grace to outsiders is paramount.' Nolland *Luke* 200-201 notes the connection between Jesus and the prophetic ministry of Elijah and Elisha. Fitzmyer *Luke* 538 also emphasises 'the prophet Elijah and his disciple Elisha are coupled here in a context in which Jesus appears as prophet and teacher'.

<sup>319</sup> Tiede *Luke* 109. Tannehill *Luke* 94. Johnson *Luke* 81.

The story of the widow in Luke 7:11-17 further demonstrates God's compassion.<sup>320</sup> It recalls the earlier passage from Luke 4:24-25 and more importantly from 1 Kings 17:8-24.<sup>321</sup> The story is set in Nain.<sup>322</sup> It opens as Jesus, his disciples and a large crowd, approach the gates of the city. Jesus 'and his crowd', are met by the widow 'and her crowd'.<sup>323</sup> The presence of such a crowd reflects the public setting of this miracle. The widow, cast in the role of a traditional widow, is nameless, silent and weeping. Her only son, her means of support, the person who gave her a place in the community, is dead. She is depicted as vulnerable, but she is located at the centre of the account.<sup>324</sup> This widow stirs Jesus' compassion and he performs three acts. He

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<sup>320</sup> This passage is set in partnership with the previous passage Luke 1:1-10 about the healing of the centurion's slave displaying Luke's characteristic pairing of a male and female.

<sup>321</sup> Reid *Choosing* 104-105. In both stories the prophet meets the widow at the gate of the city (1 Kings 17:10; Luke 17:12), and in both cases the dead son is an only son. Both stories have identical wording when the prophet gives the raised son back to his mother (1 Kings 17:23; Luke 7:15). In both incidents the healer is the one who acts and speaks for God (1 Kings 17:24; Luke 7:16). Nolland *Luke* 324. The comparison between Jesus and Elijah has a counterpart in Acts 9:36-42 in the comparison between Peter and Elisha. Cf. 2 Kings 4:22-36. See also Green *Luke* 290. The similarity between Jesus and Elijah identifies Jesus as a prophet of God in line with the prophets of old and makes known that the good news is to those who are socially marginalised. The differences between the two passages emphasise Jesus as one who had authority, who spoke not to God in prayer, but to the dead son, who is brought back to life. Jesus is the Lord (Luke 7:13). He performs the role of God (Cf. 1 Kings 17:21, 22).

<sup>322</sup> According to Nolland *Luke* 324 this is a border town in southern Galilee some 25 miles from Capernaum. Green *Luke* 290 describes it as a Galilean town located some six miles to the southeast of Nazareth. Although Luke refers to it as a city, Green claims Luke presents more a village type atmosphere with the community mourning the loss of the widow's son.

<sup>323</sup> This is in distinction to the passage above Luke 1:1-11 where Jesus appeared to travel alone.

<sup>324</sup> Green *Luke* 289. The dead man was presented as 'his mother's son, further, she was a widow, the crowd was with her, Jesus saw her, had compassion on her, spoke to her, and finally gave the dead man back to life to her.' (Luke 7:13, 15.)

tells the widow not to weep, announcing the possibility of an alternate reality.<sup>325</sup> Secondly, he interrupts a funeral procession, violating the boundaries of purity by touching the coffin of a dead person.<sup>326</sup> Thirdly, Jesus confronts death. He speaks directly to the dead person commanding life.<sup>327</sup> Jesus returns the young man, alive, to his mother, as Elijah had done for the widow of Zarephath.<sup>328</sup>

Through the narrative the crowd witnesses and interprets this act of God's compassion. They were seized with fear (Luke 7:16), recognising Jesus' activity of compassion as the visitation of God.<sup>329</sup> The miracle of resuscitation indicates that God's deliverance is at hand, and the crowd glorifies God.<sup>330</sup> God's compassion and 'good news' in the opening sermon in Luke 4:25 provoked the synagogue congregation to anger and outrage. Jesus' response of compassion to the widow of Nain provoked the crowd to God's praise and glory. In both instances God's

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<sup>325</sup> Nolland *Luke* 323. The command to stop weeping creates in the narrative a sense of anticipation, an implied promise of action. Fitzmyer *Luke* 659. This is not a command to forbid grief but is spoken in view of his coming action. Green *Luke* 292. A transparent reminder to Luke's audience that the good news of salvation will turn weeping into laughter.

<sup>326</sup> This action alone would have rendered Jesus unclean (Num 19:11, 16).

<sup>327</sup> Nolland *Luke* 323 comments on the personal authority of Jesus in his words to the corpse (Luke 7:14) 'I say to you'. He also cautions that no special resurrection connotation should be discerned. Also in spite of the eschatological setting for this resurrection it should not be seen as in the Johannine sense (John 11:25) as an anticipation of the eschatological resurrection of the dead. Green *Luke* 292. In this act of healing Jesus evidences his authorisation, status and institutional role in the salvific purposes of God.

<sup>328</sup> Tiede *Luke* 152.

<sup>329</sup> In Luke fear is the natural reaction to the presence of God.

<sup>330</sup> Green *Luke* 292-293. The crowd also proclaims Jesus a 'great prophet'. The significance of the miraculous healing is that Jesus is a great prophet in whose ministry God's salvation is being made known.

compassion on behalf of the widow points to the fulfilment of God's promise of salvation in Jesus.

### **The Widow and the Judge: Luke 18:1-8**

In Luke 18:1-8, Luke's Jesus tells a parable to his disciples.<sup>331</sup> Found only in Luke's gospel the parable is based on the characters of two people – a widow and a judge. As with the widow Anna, the widow in this story is poor and vulnerable due to her position in society; but she is also a strong and powerful character. She is a person of protest demanding justice from an unjust judge.<sup>332</sup> In the parable, the widow, a person of no standing in the community, repeatedly presents herself in a public place, before the judge, a male person of significant status, demanding her rights.<sup>333</sup> In fact, her poverty could well have produced her persistence. She must demand justice, the settling of the things due to her. She takes justice seriously. She is in no

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<sup>331</sup> Luke positions the parable after Jesus' remark on the end of the age in Luke 17:22-37 and before the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector in Luke 18:8-14. The parable itself is found in Luke 18:2-5. It is surrounded by the narrator's comment, in Luke 18:1, 6-10, about 'the need to pray and not lose heart'. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1175 comments that the passage contains more than just a parable and the relation of the other verses to it, and of the whole to the preceding episode, is a matter of no little debate.

<sup>332</sup> Thuston *Widows* 27. The issue between the judge and the woman is financial: she is a widow seeking vindication. Green *Luke* 640 agrees with this judgement, claiming it likely that the widow's claim had to do with material resources being withheld from her. Green *Luke* 639 comments that the judge was probably no more than a local magistrate, but nevertheless a male of notable status.

<sup>333</sup> Reid *Choosing* 191. The notion of a woman arguing her own case before the judge would have been startling. Adjudication was the domain of men. At the death of her husband the widow's nearest male relative would have taken responsibility for her. The complaint could well have been against the man that should have been her protector. Green *Luke* 640. The fact that this woman comes before the magistrate indicates that she has no male relative to do so. The fact that she must do so continuously suggests that she lacks economic resources to offer the appropriate bribe for a quick settlement.

position to do otherwise. She comes before the judge on a continual basis asking that he 'do his job', that he give precedence to her case and that justice be carried out.<sup>334</sup>

The judge we are told neither feared God nor cares about human beings.<sup>335</sup> This is a typical description found in extra-biblical material to describe figures of prominence.<sup>336</sup> It signifies one's thorough wickedness.<sup>337</sup> Although a judge, he does not respect or take seriously the judgment of God nor God's regard for humans and certainly not for those such as the widow and the fatherless.<sup>338</sup> We are left to believe that the judge was not concerned to find justice. The widow's vindication is not initiated by the judge's concern for justice but in response to the widow's ongoing persistent protest. The continual asking of the poor widow brings justice.<sup>339</sup> Justice was of no concern to the judge or the court whose job it was to ensure justice for all.

Marshall,<sup>340</sup> Fitzmyer,<sup>341</sup> Thurston,<sup>342</sup> Seim<sup>343</sup> and Green<sup>344</sup> claim that the parable has two foci associated with the two characters in the parable. Nolland, while

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<sup>334</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 263. Johnson *Luke* 269.

<sup>335</sup> This is against the biblical mandate where a judge was 'to judge not for man but for the Lord; he is with you in giving judgement ... there is no perversion of justice with the Lord our God, or partiality, or taking bribes' (2 Chron 19:6-7).

<sup>336</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1178.

<sup>337</sup> Green *Luke* 639.

<sup>338</sup> Tiede *Luke* 304.

<sup>339</sup> Reid *Choosing* 191. The judge had not been converted. He just wanted to be rid of a bothersome woman who he fears may 'blacken his eye'. The picture of the judge fearful of the widow borders on the absurd. See also Green *Luke* 641. 'The woman is acting so out of station that, he muses, she may be capable of assaulting him with more than words. Jesus accents the astonishingly uncharacteristic initiative and persistence of an allegedly impotent woman in the face of injustice.'

<sup>340</sup> Marshall *Luke* 669-677. The teaching about the coming of the Son of Man (Luke 17:22-37) is concluded with a parable about prayer. The purpose of the parable is said to be that of

recognising the place of the widow, gives primary position to the judge, and thus recognises, primarily, the activity of God.<sup>345</sup> The unjust judge in the parable provides

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encouraging the disciples to pray until the Parousia and not to give up hope. The parable itself (Luke 18:2-5) contains no application. The application is made in Luke 18:6-8. The judge is the principal character. The point of the parable is the contrast between the judge and God. The parable then turns in application to the disciples and asks whether they will show a faith as persistent as the nagging of the widow.

<sup>341</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1176-1177 regards the parable proper as including Luke 18:2-6. He claims 'that two factors, the attitude of the widow and the attitude of the judge, are tightly interwoven'. Luke 18:6 makes the argument on the basis of the lesser to the greater – if the unjust God would hear the prayer how much more would God. Fitzmyer continues 'if the helpless widow's persistent prayer accomplishes so much with a dishonest judge, how much more will the persistent prayer of Christian disciples'. Against this see Seim *Double Message* 244 note 177.

<sup>342</sup> Thurston *Widows* 27. According to Thurston, the point of the parable is that God will vindicate his elect who cry to him day and night (Luke 18:7). Prayer, even if it appears to be ignored, will be answered.

<sup>343</sup> Seim *Double Message* 244. Seim refers to the Lucan introduction addressing the purpose of the parable (Luke 18:1), the importance of perseverance in prayer. The widow is 'presented as a positive model of persistent prayer, and those who hear the parable are to learn a positive lesson from her victory.' Seim also notes that it is a matter of debate as to what extent the widow alone is the protagonist, or whether there is an interplay between the widow and the unrighteous judge.

<sup>344</sup> Green *Luke* 636-638. The parable has two foci associated with the two primary characters of the parable in Luke 18:2-5. Based on the contrasting relationship between the judge and God there is the lesson of the faithfulness of God, the certainty of God's justice and on the widow, the call for resolute faithfulness in anticipation of God - a model of perseverance in the face of wrong. Green notes that Luke's question in Luke 18:8 is not concerned with faith – in general, but the faith – the manner of faith demonstrated by the widow. 'It is in the interplay between Luke's interpretive introduction in v1, Jesus' parting words concerning 'faith on earth' (v8b), and his characterisation of the widow in vv3 and 5 that we are able to discern the quality of life appropriate to Jesus' followers prior to the eschaton. Jesus positions the widow as an archetype, the idea of prayer for the full realization of God's project is now expanded so as to signify the active quest for justice.'

<sup>345</sup> Nolland *Luke* 866-867. Nolland claims that the parable is primarily about the unjust judge and not about the widow. He notes the relationship to Sir 35:12-24.

a contrast to the activities of God and the widow exemplifies the faith of disciples. Marshall, Fitzmyer, Thurston, Seim and Green focus on the parable as one that illustrates persistent prayer. Reid disagrees and claims that there are serious theological difficulties if this is the case. She argues that the parable proper (Luke 18:2-5) is rather to be seen as one that exemplifies persistence in demanding justice.<sup>346</sup> She claims that it is the widow, not the judge, who represents God.<sup>347</sup> According to Reid, God is now not only seen to be relentlessly pursuing justice but is also imaged as a poor widow.

While Reid's position is attractive it fails to deal adequately with Luke 18:6 and with the eschatological setting of the parable. When the parable is read from the perspective of the two protagonists, the widow and the judge, the reader is reminded of the surety of God's initiative to vindicate and grant justice, based on the analogy between the unjust judge and God and an argument from lesser to greater. The second analogy is established between the widow and God's 'elect who call to him night and day'. The understanding of the human response of prayer (Luke 18:1), the persistent crying to God, day and night (Luke 18:7), must now be understood to encompass the notion of protest, the dogged pursuit of justice as seen by the widow in Luke 18:2-5. Luke 18:8 together with the preceding passage in Luke 17:20-37 sets the whole passage within an eschatological framework, and gives instruction for

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<sup>346</sup> Reid *Choosing* 192. 'If the widow is an exemplar of persistent prayer, then the judge would represent God. However, the judge is specifically said to be unjust and dishonourable' which is 'totally contrary to what the scriptures say of God. Cf Sir 35:14-19'. 'Furthermore, this interpretation presents a theology of prayer that says, if one begs God long enough the request will be answered. This image does not reconcile with a gracious God who is looking to give good gifts to all who ask (Luke 11:9-13)?'.

human behaviour in the face of ongoing injustice and delay in God's coming. The urgency of the question becomes not one of God's faithfulness, but will the human response of faith - the faith of the widow which encompasses prayer and protest - be found at the coming of the Son of Man.

### **The Widow in the Temple: Luke 21:1-4**

Luke 21:1-4 tells the story of a widow who places her whole livelihood at the disposal of the temple treasury. The story is found in Mark's gospel account (Mark 12:41-44) but omitted in Matthew's. It is linked to the previous three verses (Luke 20:45-47) where Jesus is teaching his disciples, warning them against the scribes.<sup>348</sup> Taken together with the preceding verses it is a story of contrasts.<sup>349</sup> Those who interpret God's law on behalf of Israel, and the temple system that was to be the

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<sup>347</sup> This is in contrast to other readings where prayer is the key point, and then the judge represents God.

<sup>348</sup> Marshall *Luke* 750. Luke 21:1-4 is joined to the previous verses by the catchword 'widow' and by the contrast between false piety and true piety. Green *Luke* 725. Luke has set these two moments of instruction to the disciples in one scene, indicating their intimate affinity. They are located adjacent to one another. They are also bound together with respect to theme - by repetition of the term 'widow' (Luke 20:47; 21:2-3) and in reference to her livelihood ('houses' - Luke 20:47 and 'all she had to live on' - Luke 21:1-4), and by staging Luke 21:1-4 as an example of the teaching of Luke 20:45-47.

<sup>349</sup> Green *Luke* 725. There are two main groups of characters. Both function to symbolise opposing kinds of people. Firstly the legal experts, the scribes, who have been cast as hostile to Jesus, rejecting the plan of God (see Luke 6:1-11; 7:29-30). They were interpreters of the law of God and their position among the people was pivotal. Luke presents the scribes as people of elevated status, alongside the leading priests in Jerusalem. Secondly and at the opposite end of the scale and privilege were the widows. Seim *Double Message* 95. The widow of Luke 21:1-4 must be seen as a double contrast. By means of the context, she is contrasted with the hypocritical scribes, and within the narrative itself she is contrasted with the rich, who give out of their superabundance an amount that they themselves hardly notice. Marshall *Luke*

embodiment of God's presence for Israel are set against the widow – those for whom God had expressed particular care. This story contrasts those with riches with the poverty of a widow. Fundamentally the story is contrasting a false piety, that dissociates financial care from prayer, with true piety, where prayer, personal and financial giving is interwoven.

The widow of Luke 21:1-4 is an exemplary figure.<sup>350</sup> Her strong presentation demonstrates that the radical redistribution of possessions and resources for the benefit of the community is an expression of the kingdom of God.<sup>351</sup> The widow's

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750-751. Luke 21:1-4 is a contrast between rich and poor rather than the scribes and the widow. In both contrasts false piety and true piety is the real issue.

<sup>350</sup> A number of scholars claim that the story is not one of praise for the widow but of condemnation for those who have been responsible for the temple system that takes the widow's livelihood. Green *Luke* 728. In Luke 21:1-4 Jesus 'laments the travesty of a religious system that has as its effect the devouring of this widow's livelihood'. 'In no way does Luke suggest that Jesus finds the widow's action exemplary or praiseworthy'. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1321. 'In the preceding episode Jesus was displeased with what the scribes were doing to widows' estates; here he is no more pleased with what he sees'. 'Jesus' words are words of lament not praise'. Reid *Choosing* 196. A second interpretation 'questions whether her sacrifice is to be lauded' and when read in conjunction with Luke 20:45-47 'another meaning altogether emerges'. In this 'Jesus is not praising the woman's generosity but lamenting the religious system that takes advantage of her'. Reid concludes there is 'nothing that reveals how the story is to be taken. In vv 3-4 Jesus simply remarks on the amount put into the treasury. We do not know if it is a tone of lament or praise'. See also Addison Wright 'The Widow's Mites: Praise or Lament? – A Matter of Context' *CBQ* (1982) 256-265. Against Wright see Tannehill *Luke* 300 who highlights the importance of the contrast as discussed above.

<sup>351</sup> Seim *Double Message* 77. The 'demand/ideal of giving up possessions and realising property for the benefit of the community (cf. Luke 12:13-14; 14:33; 18:18-30; 19:1-10) is not an idealisation of poverty, but a model of radical redistribution'. 'This is presented as conditions of the kingdom of God and reflects the practical implementation of the divine reversal. God is the ultimate guarantor of the system, compensating for the lack of human reciprocity in a last divine return'. Halvor Moxnes *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic*

absolute reliance on God is demonstrated by the way in which she puts her whole life and livelihood into the temple treasury.<sup>352</sup> Through the example of her self-giving action she exposes the lack of generosity of the religious leaders. While the scribes and the rich live in a manner that accumulates wealth and deprives the poor, the widow lives a life abandoned to the promises of God, she lives a life with a radical eschatological orientation.<sup>353</sup> Through this contrast Luke draws attention to the injustice of the temple system and prepares for Jesus' prophetic judgement of the Temple and its leadership.<sup>354</sup>

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*Relations in Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 70. Most economic exchanges in the first 19 chapters of Luke's gospel 'are either reciprocal exchange between villagers or between landlords and tenants' in an 'unequal patron-client relationship'. In the Jerusalem section of the gospel the central powers in the country are on centre stage. 'There is a concentration of references to money and economic interaction: expulsion of vendors from the Temple (Luke 19:45-46), question about tribute to Caesar (Luke 20:20-26), and the widow's gift to the treasury (Luke 21:1-4). These instances of economic exchange are related to the system of redistribution – economic exchange through a central authority. The authority that Jesus challenges in these narratives is the power to control the collection and redistribution of resources belonging to the Jewish people'.

<sup>352</sup> Reid *Choosing* 195. Luke 21:4 has a double meaning. The Greek word *bios* means both 'life itself' and 'means of subsistence'. There are two nuances, 'she put in all the means she had to live on' and 'she put in all the life she had'. The second connotation is highlighted by the literary context. Located just before the passion narrative she and the widow Anna (Luke 2:37) frame the gospel story with the pouring out of their lives in the Temple. See also Seim *Double Message* 78. Nolland *Luke* 979, 980.

<sup>353</sup> Seim *Double Message* 246.

<sup>354</sup> Green *Luke* 729. The temple treasury is set up in a way that fends off those who cannot fend for themselves. However, the Temple treasury also has an inherent claim to divine legitimation. It is God's own house. Hence the necessity of Jesus' criticism throughout Luke and his prophetic judgement against the Temple and its leadership (Luke 19:41-48 and 21:5-38).

The scribes' treatment of the widow reveals their own relationship with God and demonstrates their rejection of the plan of God. Those who 'devour widows' houses' (Luke 20:47) are condemned by their actions. While they might be Jews of the Temple and the Torah, scribes and Pharisees, they have lost the essence of the relationship with God. God redeemed God's people from slavery, and they in turn are to look after the widow and the fatherless, the poor and the sojourner. When the people fail to care God acts to bring justice to the widow and the fatherless. But God acts independently of God's people.<sup>355</sup>

### **Summary**

In Luke's gospel widows operate in partnership with God to reveal God's divine purposes. They make no response to Jesus themselves. When Anna comes to the baby Jesus she gives thanks to God, and tells of Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel (Luke 2:38). The widow of Zarephath is introduced as part of Jesus' sermon in the Nazareth synagogue. The widow of Nain happens to be going through the city gate as part of the funeral procession for her son as Jesus is coming in. She makes no gesture of request or thanks. The widow with the judge appears in a parable told by Jesus to the disciples but she makes no response to Jesus. The widow, who puts her last mite in the temple treasury, is quite unaware of Jesus. Jesus observes her and comments on her as part of his teaching to the disciples, against the practices of the scribes.

Yet the widows in Luke's gospel are presented as strong, public characters. Anna, the widow and the judge, and the widow in the Temple tell of a God who is present but not captive to the religious expectations of the Temple or temple system nor to the

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<sup>355</sup> Tiede *Luke* 335.

secular legal systems. Through the narrative of these widows, Luke confronts the dominance and injustice of the Temple and temple system and reveals a God who is present as the one holding the future promise of salvation. Jesus aligns not with the priests and temple elite who claim to mediate God's presence, but with the God who cares for the widows. Anna welcomes Jesus and speaks of him to all that were looking for the redemption of Israel. In the story, the widow of Nain provokes the compassion of Jesus who confronts death itself and restores the life of her son. The people publicly acknowledge Jesus' presence as the prophet from God. In this action of Jesus' compassion they recognise that God has visited God's people (Luke 7:16).

On the other hand, widows represent the ideal human response of faith. They are the ones who live a life of prayer. Their prayer is not that of the rich, or the powerful, but of those who have no other means for survival than to rely on God. Their prayer embraces the action of protest for justice, as seen in the story of the widow and the judge. It includes action that demonstrates a radical abandonment to the economy of the new community, as seen in the story of the widow in the Temple. The prayer of the widows - Anna, the widow and the judge and the widow in the Temple - confronts the injustice and power of the Temple and temple establishment as it is founded on a hope that is secured in the eschatological promises of God. Widows embody the human response of faith.

## CHAPTER 7: SICK, SINNERS, PHARISEES AND GOD

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First century Jewish society was based on the understanding that the Jewish people were a holy people because God had called them apart. Purity was fundamental to their identity as the people of God. Their society was structured to maintain their purity. Those considered whole or pure were at the heart of the community and those who were unclean or impure were removed to the margins. In his narrative Luke shows a special concern with people who lived on the periphery of the village – the sick, the sinners and the poor.<sup>356</sup> Through the narrative Luke challenges the purity boundary marked by ritual cleanliness and separation and establishes a new purity boundary for the people of God marked by forgiveness, love, faith, community and jubilee - the year of the Lord's favour. Jesus' authoritative action of liberating, healing, forgiving and creating community with those who were sick or

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<sup>356</sup> Moxnes *Economy* 48-51. Luke's geography is determined by the story of Jesus and his movements. In Luke 1 and 2, the Jerusalem scene with the Temple has links with the village scenes of Bethlehem and Nazareth. From Luke 3:1 to Luke 19:27 the village scene dominates. The general setting for this section of the gospel is always peasant towns or villages outside Jerusalem. From Luke 19:27 to the end of the gospel in Luke 24 Jerusalem, with both Jewish and Roman authorities, provides the focus. For the description of place from Luke 3:1 to 19:27 Luke uses the term *polis* in a non-technical sense. He does not distinguish between a 'town' (*polis*) which is the technical term for a Hellenistic town with some form of self-government and a rural village (*kome*). When Luke uses the term a *polis*, the community he describes is that of a *kome* or Jewish village. A village is a human community that has typical social and psychological features. The towns/villages described by Luke tend to appear as distinctive, homogeneous entities. The gospel often refers to those from the village as a unit – for example the population of a village can be described as 'a large crowd' (Luke 7:11, 12). On the other hand, the citizens of a village can be referred to as a unit 'Woe to you Chorazin' (Luke 10:13).

sinners challenged the purity code of Israel and provoked conflict with those depicted in the Lucan narrative as upholders of the ritual purity code and temple system - the Pharisees and Jewish leaders.

Further understanding of the concept of purity will add clarity to the way in which Luke's narrative assumes the rules of temple purity in the accounts of Jesus' interaction with the sick and sinners. Mary Douglas, a British anthropologist, provides a model for the correlation of belief systems and social order.<sup>357</sup> She identifies the notion of pollution behaviour and demonstrates that it is a fundamental organising principle within society. 'Reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death. Wherever ideas of dirt are highly structured their analysis discloses a play upon such profound themes.'<sup>358</sup> Douglas claims that 'dirt' is essentially disorder, 'matter out of place'. She argues that this understanding 'implies two conditions: a set of ordered relationships and a contravention of that order.' Where there is dirt there is a system. Furthermore, she says that when we use the word dirt 'we are using a kind of *omnibus compendium* which includes all the rejected elements of ordered societies'.

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Towns and cities outside a particular village are looked on with suspicion and foreigners and strangers and non-Jews were looked on with even stronger hostility.

<sup>357</sup> Mary Douglas *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Limited, 1966).

<sup>358</sup> Douglas *Purity and Danger* 2-3, 5-6. Douglas argues that our aversion to dirt is not due primarily to fear, dread or holy terror, but rather that it reflects our attempt to order our environment to make it conform to our idea of how it should be. Dirt is our perception of 'out of placeness'. It offends against our understanding of order. Douglas claims that 'rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience. They are the means by which symbolic patterns are worked out and publicly displayed. Within these patterns disparate elements are related and disparate experience is given meaning.'

Uncleanness or dirt must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained.<sup>359</sup> Malina summarises the concept of purity as follows:

‘purity is specifically about the cultural map of social time and space, about arrangements within the space thus defined, and especially about the boundaries separating the inside from the outside. The unclean or impure is something that does not fit the space in which it is found, that belongs elsewhere, that causes confusion in the arrangement of the generally accepted social map because it overruns the boundaries.’<sup>360</sup>

This concept of purity and ‘pollution behaviour’ can be seen in the Old Testament prohibitions of Deut 14:3-20 and Lev 11:2-42. Douglas draws attention to the fact that the key to understanding the prohibitions lies in recognising their preface, the command to be holy (Deut 14:2). The abominations address both the ideal order and the human activity or pattern that preserves the order of holiness or, if violated, creates pollution. Douglas explores the Hebrew concept of holy as the fundamental order of Jewish society.<sup>361</sup> She develops this understanding arguing that holiness is exemplified by completeness; holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong and holiness requires that different classes of things shall

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<sup>359</sup> Douglas *Purity and Danger* 35-40.

<sup>360</sup> Malina *New Testament World* 125.

<sup>361</sup> Douglas *Purity and Danger* 49-50. Holiness is an attribute of the Godhead. Its root means ‘set apart’. God’s blessing is the source of all good things, God’s withdrawal of blessing is the source of all dangers. God’s work through God’s blessing is to create order. God’s blessing is obtained by keeping God’s covenant and observing all his precepts and ceremonies (Deut 28:1-4). These precepts and ceremonies are focused on the idea of the holiness of God that human beings must create in their own lives. Hence we live in a universe where people prosper by conforming to holiness and perish when they deviate from it.

not be confused.<sup>362</sup> The importance given to this understanding of purity as the fundamental organising principle of Jewish society is also seen in the Mishnah, where one of the six divisions is devoted entirely to issues of ritual purity<sup>363</sup>. Further, Neyrey, using rabbinic literature and drawing on the work of Douglas, has reconstructed maps for several socio-symbolic systems.<sup>364</sup> Of particular interest for

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<sup>362</sup> Douglas *Purity and Danger* 51-53. Leviticus speaks of the physical perfection that is required of things presented in the Temple and approaching it. The idea of holiness was given an external physical expression in the wholeness of the body seen as the perfect container. See also Malina *New Testament World* 129.

<sup>363</sup> The Mishnah is a collection of Jewish legal material compiled in Palestine between 160 CE and 200 CE. It is arranged into six major orders: Agriculture (dealing with laws of agriculture), Appointed Times (dealing with laws of the Sabbath and the Festivals), Women (dealing with laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and family relationships), The Order of Damages (dealing with civil and criminal statutes and court procedures), Sacred Matters (dealing with laws of Sacrifice and temple cult), Purities (dealing with laws of ritual uncleanness). See *The Mishnah* translated from the Hebrew with introduction and brief explanatory notes by Herbert Danby (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). See also. *The Mishnah: A New Translation* Jacob Neusner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>364</sup> Neyrey 'Symbolic Universe' 278-280. The maps demonstrate the importance of the Temple and holiness (wholeness) in determining the values, order and classification of Jewish society. In the map of Places, Gentiles do not feature as they are not regarded as God's people. 'Israel is holy', set apart. This map demonstrates 'an important principle of classification' - the 10 degrees of holiness move 'from non-temple to Temple', from outside to the Holy of Holies where God is. The clear principle of classification is 'proximity to the heart of the Temple'.

'There are ten degrees of holiness:

1. The land of Israel is holier than any other land
2. the walled cities (of the land of Israel) are still more holy,
3. within the walls (of Jerusalem) is still more holy
4. the Temple mount is still more holy,
5. the rampart is still more holy
6. the court of women is still more holy,
7. the court of the Israelites is still more holy
8. the court of priests is still more holy,
9. between the porch and the altar is still more holy
10. the sanctuary is still more holy,

The Holy of Holies is still more holy.'

this thesis is the map of people. Neyrey claims there are two principles of classification operating with regard to the mapping of people in Jewish society. First, is the principle of holiness or wholeness where those with damaged bodies are ranked last. The second principle is that of proximity to the centre of the Temple where those closest to the centre are ranked first. He offers the following order that shows the place of women, along with those of damaged bodies, at the bottom.

***A map of People according to Purity***

1. priests
2. Levites
3. Israelites
4. converts
5. freed slaves
6. disqualified priests (illegitimate children of priests)
7. netzins (Temple slaves)
8. mamzers (bastards)
9. eunuchs
10. those with damaged testicles
11. those without a penis.

Ritual purity was a key organising principle in Jewish society. However, the strictness of the system and the difficulty of complying with its regulations led to the marginalising of many people.<sup>365</sup> Those who were sick, poor or regarded as sinners were found at the periphery of village society. Health and wellbeing were perceived as good fortune and were seen as blessings by God. Sickness was viewed as misfortune. Sickness and health were both understood within the value framework of ritual purity and pollution.

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The map of Uncleanesses provides a classification of pollution from contact with things: impurity contracted from a dead thing is exceeded by that from a menstruant, which is exceeded by bodily issues such as semen, urine, spittle, and so on. Times are also ordered in the Mishnah. Sabbath is considered most sacred followed by Passover, Day of Atonement, Feast of the Tabernacles, Festival days, Rosh ha-Shana.

<sup>365</sup> Myers *Binding* 75.

Pilch draws on the standard terms developed by medical anthropology to assist us to understand the concepts of sickness and health as used within a first century framework.<sup>366</sup> He argues that in medical anthropology the word sickness is a blanket term describing a reality - a lack of wellbeing or misfortune. Disease and illness are specific terms that explore different facets of the reality of sickness. The term disease denotes a concept that reflects a biomedical perspective that sees abnormalities in the structure or function of organ systems. It is a term that is foreign to Luke's culture.<sup>367</sup> Illness on the other hand is a term that reflects a socio-cultural perspective that depends on social and personal perception of certain socially disvalued states and describes more the experience of misfortune as known in the first century culture.<sup>368</sup> Cure is used in conjunction with a disease, while an intervention that affects an illness is termed healing.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> John J Pilch 'Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed Jerome H Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 190-192.

<sup>367</sup> Whether or not they are recognised within the culture pathological states do exist. Disease affects individuals. Pilch argues that this understanding of individually experienced disease would be quite foreign with Luke's world. Firstly, people were dyadic individuals and saw themselves within a particular group. Secondly, the understanding of disease relies on the identification of pathogens, germs and viruses the knowledge of which would have been outside the experience of first century people. So while they might have been suffering from a disease the people of the first century Mediterranean world would not have either the terminology to express it nor the concepts to know it, let alone the technology to view it.

<sup>368</sup> Pilch 'Sickness and Healing' 191. Pilch cites the example of leprosy as described in Lev 13-14, claiming that it is not the modern variety of leprosy, but rather a skin condition. However, the socio-cultural concern over it and the consequences of a person suffering from the condition are very real.

<sup>369</sup> Pilch 'Sickness and Healing' 192. Healing essentially involves the provision of personal and social meaning for life problems that accompany health misfortunes.

Neyrey's map locates both women and the sick. In order to assist us to understand the world in which Luke writes we need to understand a little more about those whom Luke refers to as sinners. Malina and Neyrey comment 'a Mediterranean like Luke would describe an abnormal person by saying ... 'she was a sinner',<sup>370</sup> and Fiorenza writes:

'The notion of "sinner" can have a range of meanings. It can characterise people who did not keep the Torah, whether in the stricter Sadducean or the wider Pharisaic senses; those who, in our terms, were criminals; or those who worked in disreputable jobs such as fruit sellers, swineherders, garlic peddlers, bartenders, seamen, public announcers, tax collectors, pimps, prostitutes, servants, and other service occupations, all of which were deemed "polluting" or "unclean" by theologians and interpreters of the Torah. All categories of sinners were in one way or another marginal people who were badly paid and often abused.'<sup>371</sup>

However, Neale pursues this question further. Firstly, he reviews a number of modern attempts to define sinners.<sup>372</sup> Secondly, he addresses the literary evidence for

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<sup>370</sup> Bruce Malina and Jerome H Neyrey 'First Century Personality' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 78.

<sup>371</sup> Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1983) 128.

<sup>372</sup> David A Neale *None But The Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke JSNTSS Series 58* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 69-71. Neale cites the work of Jeremais, Perrin, Horsley, Westerholm, Borg and Sanders in his discussion of sinners. Jeremais (J Jeremais 'Zollner und Sunder' *ZNW* 30 (1931) 293-300) claims that the sinners are understood in the same sense as the hated tax collectors. For Jeremais the significance of the term sinner is in its connotation of moral disrepute. Such a person might be guilty of an immoral life or a practitioner of one of the dishonourable vocations. They could be robbers, prostitutes, pagans, swindlers, adulterers, moneychangers or those who work in one of the despised trades. Norman Perrin *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967) 93-94. Perrin claimed that we should think in terms of three different kinds of sinners. Gentiles for whom there was no hope of

the term 'sinners' from the Greek Psalms and other primary sources.<sup>373</sup> Neale concludes:

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salvation, Jews who could repent without much difficulty and thirdly Jews who had 'made themselves as Gentiles' and for whom penitence, while not impossible, was almost insurmountably difficult. See also Richard Horsley *Jesus and the Spiral of Violence: Popular Jewish Resistance in Roman Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987) 217-221. Horsley proposes three meanings for the term sinner - those into whose hands Jesus is betrayed in the Gospel story, the priestly aristocracy; secondly, the average Jew who stands in need of repentance; and thirdly, the group who are despised tradesmen. Two other writers are mentioned by Neale. Stephen Westerholm *Jesus and Scribal Authority* (Lund: Gleerup, 1978). 71. Westerholm asserts that those who disregarded the scribal regulations on Pharisaic purity were sinners. Marcus Borg *Conflict Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (New York: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1984) 80-81. Borg claims that the term sinners referred to 'an identifiable social group' that included despised tradesmen, the flagrantly immoral, the non-Pharisee and the Gentile. See EP Sanders *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 177. Sanders claims that sinners are those who sinned wilfully and heinously and who did not repent. Neale claims that all modern attempts to define sinners reflect two basic features: sinners are flagrantly immoral and/or they belong to a despised trade. Neale debates these two features. As to the first, that sinners are flagrantly immoral, Neale disputes that this could mark out an identifiable social group. While he does not doubt that some ancient Jews did flagrantly transgress the law, he questions what they actually did and who would perceive those acts as flagrant and, further, that this definition could mark out an identifiable group. Similarly, he questions that those who notoriously failed to observe the commandments of God would then, therefore, have everyone pointing the finger at them. Secondly, regarding despised trades, he writes 'the despised trades were not a clearly defined social category in Jesus' time and it seems unlikely that they ever existed in substantial form'.

<sup>373</sup> Neale *Sinners* 75-96. In reference to the use of sinner in the Old Testament the sinners theme is most frequent in the Psalms. Neale continues claiming that the psalms are the most quoted book in the New Testament so there can be little doubt that the Psalter figured prominently in supplying the semantic understanding of the sinner in this period. Looking at the general features of a sinner in this period one of the basic observations is the sinners in the Greek Psalms are a corporate entity. They are always spoken of in the plural. They are a group who in the mind of the author are the very opposite of all that is good and acceptable. So for the Psalms, the sinner is not an individual but a type for the 'wicked' as a group. Furthermore, the language of sinners in the Psalter is the language of judgement, condemnation and destruction. A review of other literature from the second century BCE to

'it is best to think of "sinners" not in terms of socially identifiable referents, but as a religious "category". A world view which contains conceptions of absolute right and wrong must have such a category. It is an essential element in a system of thought which distinguishes between good and evil; the "sinners" are the necessary counterpart of the "righteous".<sup>374</sup>

It could well be argued that the designation 'sinner' was a product of a society that was ordered by a strong purity code.

The Lucan narrative operates within the world of ritual purity. Luke has retained many of the healing incidents found in Mark, he has included healing incidents from Q, and some accounts are unique to Luke.<sup>375</sup> Luke has also specifically included

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the turn of the era suggests that there is strong literary evidence of a view of sinners that is in basic harmony with the ideological representation of the righteous and sinners in the psalms. The material is basically ahistorical in its content, but it is primarily a reflection of the ideology and religious point of view of the author.

<sup>374</sup> Neale *Sinners* 97.

<sup>375</sup> Summary of accounts of illness in the Lucan narrative.

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Matthew/Mark</b>
Luke 4:33-37		Jesus heals the man with an evil spirit. in the synagogue, on the Sabbath		Mark 1:23-28
Luke 4:40-41			Jesus heals many with various diseases	Matt 8:16-17; Mark 1:32-34
Luke 6:18			A large crowd came be healed. Public place. Part of the sermon on the plain	Matt 4:24-5:2; Mark 3:7-13a
Luke 7:21, 22-23			Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses, diseases, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many blind people - public place	Matt 11:2-6
Luke 8:2-3	Women healed of evil spirits and diseases now part of the ministering community			
Luke 8:26-39		In the territory of Gerasa, Jesus heals a man with an evil spirit		Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20

stories of sinners.<sup>376</sup> In his narrative there are six accounts of women who were sick or sinners. Two are derived from Mark and four are unique to Luke. They include

Luke 9:37-43		Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit, disciples unable to heal		Matt 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29
Luke 9:49			Man driving out evil spirits in Jesus' name	Mark 9:38-41
Luke 13:32			Jesus describes to Herod his work of driving out demons and performing cures	

***Illness where specific parts of the body are reported***

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Matthew/Mark</b>
Luke 4:38-39	Simon's mother-in-law, sick with a high fever. Healed by Jesus' touch in the house, on the Sabbath		Mark 1:23-28
Luke 5:12-16		Jesus heals a man suffering from leprosy	Matt 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45
Luke 5:17-26		Jesus heals a paralysed man	Matt 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12
Luke 6:6-11		Jesus heals a man with a paralysed hand, in the synagogue, on the sabbath	Matt 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6
Luke 7:1-10		Jesus heals the servant of a Centurion, a Roman officer, in Capernaum	Matt 8:5-13
Luke 7:11-16		Jesus resuscitates a widow's son from death	
Luke 8:42-48	Jesus heals a woman with a haemorrhage		Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43
Luke 8:40-42, 49-56	Jesus resuscitates Jairus' daughter from death, inside the house		Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43
Luke 11:14-23		Jesus driving out a demon that could not talk - the man began to talk	Matt 12:22-30; Mark 3:22-27
Luke 13:10-17	Jesus heals a crippled woman, in the synagogue, on the Sabbath		
Luke 14:1-6		Jesus heals a sick man, at the house of one of the Pharisees, on the Sabbath	
Luke 18:35-43		Jesus heals a blind beggar, near Jericho	Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10: 46-52
Luke 22:47-54a		Jesus heals the ear of the slave of the High Priest	Passage in Matt and Mark. Only Luke tells of the healing

<sup>376</sup> He has retained and developed the Marcan story of Levi the tax collector (Luke 5:27-32). Luke has added the story of the woman of the city, a sinner who invites herself to the Pharisee's dinner party (Luke 7:36-50) and the account of Zacchaeus one of the chief tax collectors (Luke 19:1-10). These last two accounts are unique to Luke.

Luke's redaction of the Marcan incident of the healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the haemorrhage (Luke 8:40-55), the account of the woman, a sinner, who attends the Pharisee's dinner (Luke 7:36-50) and the healing of the crippled woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath (13:10-17). The story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39) and the women from Galilee (Luke 8:1-3) will be addressed in the next chapter.

## **Healing of Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with the Haemorrhage:**

### **Luke 8:40-55**

In Luke 8:40-55 the story of the healing of a woman with a haemorrhage is intercalated with the story of the healing/resuscitation of the daughter of the synagogue leader.<sup>377</sup> The passage is found in both Mark and Matthew in addition to Luke's gospel. Luke has retained the Marcan story and included it to support his narrative.<sup>378</sup> Luke draws the reader into the story of the lives of two women: one is

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<sup>377</sup> Reid *Choosing* 136. Mark is well known for his technique of intercalating one story with another which results in each story enabling a better understanding of the other. In this case the faith of the woman with the haemorrhage is a model of the faith that Jairus would need for the healing of his daughter. The power that healed the bleeding woman is the same as the power needed to raise Jairus' daughter. See also Green *Luke* 343. The two passages are tied together by numerous commonalities at the linguistic and topical levels - falling before Jesus (vv41, 47), daughter (vv42, 48, 49), 12 years (vv42, 43), desperate circumstances (vv42, 43, 49), the fact and immediacy of the healing (vv44, 47, 55), touching (vv44, 45, 46, 47, 53), impurity (flow of blood - v43 and corpse - vv53, 54), fear (vv45, 47, 50), and the inseparable connection between faith and salvation (vv48, 50). Through the intercalation Luke presents the simultaneous unfolding of both events. The interruption of one story by the other heightens the drama of the first, prolonging narrative time and allowing for the death of Jairus' daughter.

<sup>378</sup> Marshall *Luke* 341. There is no evidence for any source other than Mark being used at this point, and Luke has made little significant change in his source; his alterations are almost entirely abbreviations and stylistic improvements. Nolland *Luke* 418. Notes that in the Lucan form the opening verse links the events here with Jesus' dealings with the amassing crowd in vv4-21. The mention of the crowd here prepares for their role in Jesus' encounter with the woman. Fitzmyer *Luke* 743. Agrees that Luke has joined the stories to what precedes more closely than Mark (Luke 8:40). He introduces the age of the girl early into his form of the story and adds that she was her father's only child. In Luke 8:43 Luke softens the criticism of the physicians. In Luke 8:45 Peter becomes the spokesman for the disciples. In Luke 8:46 Jesus is made to say that power had gone forth from him whereas in Mark the evangelist said this. In Luke 8:53 Luke explains why the crowd laughed at Jesus when he said that the girl was only sleeping and in Luke 8:55 he adds that 'her breath returned'. There are also some changes to

sick, the other is dying. The power of God in Jesus and the human response of faith bring not only healing and salvation at a personal level, but also change to the fabric of Jewish society. Through the narrative Luke demonstrates that God is present in the person of Jesus and that God's blessing of wellbeing and salvation is appropriated into human history through the individual response of faith. This sets a new purity boundary - that of faith and community. It renders obsolete the ritual purity rules of separation and cleanliness as the means of ordering society so as to maintain the relationship of the Jewish people with God.

The narrative opens with Jesus' return from Gentile country.<sup>379</sup> Both Jairus and a woman with a haemorrhage come to Jesus. Jairus, a leader of the synagogue,<sup>380</sup>

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the final verses in this account. In Mark's account Jesus has the mourners leave the house of Jairus. In Luke's account Jesus allows no one to enter the house except Peter, James, John and the father and mother of the child. Green *Luke* 344-345. Luke's account of the raising of Jairus' daughter has several points in common with the account of the Centurion in Luke 7:1-10 and also with the raising of the son of the widow of Nain in Luke 7:11-17. Both the stories of Jairus and of the widow are of resuscitation and involve an only child (Luke 7:12 and 8:42). Both contain echoes of the Elijah account in 1 Kings 11:7-17. Jesus' words 'Do not weep' are replicated in Luke 7:13 and 8:52. As such both are understood as evidence of Jesus' Messiahship and the extension of the good news to the poor. Reid *Choosing* 137. In a culture that prized sons far more than daughters it is notable that when two stories are read in tandem, an equal value is given by Jesus to the life of a daughter. See also Seim *Double Message* 17, 55, 56 for contrast between Jairus and the widow of Nain.

<sup>379</sup> Green *Luke* 344. Jesus had been in a situation that epitomised ritual impurity – interacting with a demoniac who made the tombs his abode, in close proximity to a herd of pigs, with no hint of any observance of the Mosaic law.

<sup>380</sup> Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 28. The synagogue head was responsible in a special way for seeing that 'the reading of the law and the teaching of the commands' were done. It seems that the head of the synagogue was a person learned in the law. A major function of the synagogue head was the exhortation and spiritual direction of the congregation, including teaching. Luke apparently regards *archisynagougos* and *synagougos* as synonymous,

comes to Jesus directly, but humbly, and begs Jesus to come to his home.<sup>381</sup> Jairus' daughter, the readers are told, was sick and dying.<sup>382</sup> In the sickness of his only child, Jairus, a guardian of Jewish purity, was facing the greatest impurity, death. The directness of Jairus' approach can be compared with the indirectness of the approach of the woman with the haemorrhage.<sup>383</sup> The woman is unnamed and unknown. She has been haemorrhaging for 12 years. She is poor, impure and marginalised by the Jews who adhere to the regulations of ritual purity as written in Lev 15:25-31.<sup>384</sup> The thronging crowd masks her presence.<sup>385</sup> She is hidden, fearful and afraid, yet she takes the initiative to touch Jesus, breaking all biblical and social purity laws. Even although she makes no request, her approach is unique among the gospel stories.<sup>386</sup>

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even though there is some evidence to suggest that their roles ought to be distinguished historically. Brooten *Women in Ancient Synagogues* 15-30. Nolland *Luke* 419. Luke stresses Jairus' dignity and place in the Jewish establishment. Jairus is an official representative of Judaism who is here before Jesus in the position of a would-be disciple.

<sup>381</sup> Green *Luke* 345-346. Jesus has generally met opposition in space delimited by the synagogue. Here a synagogue ruler invites Jesus to his home.

<sup>382</sup> Jairus' daughter, a 12 year old girl, was near death. The dead rank among the most unclean of all people.

<sup>383</sup> See Seim *Double Message* 55.

<sup>384</sup> Reid *Choosing* 139. The woman would have been quite alone. 'If she were married she would not have been able to have relations with her husband or to carry out any of her domestic duties for him or her family without making them unclean. Everything she touched – furniture, cooking utensils, clothing – would be rendered ritually unclean. If she had children, she would not have been able to cradle them without passing her impurity on to them. Her friends and associates would likewise need to keep their distance'. Her aloneness is exaggerated in the first century cultural context where her sense of identity is so derived from the community to which a person belongs. See also Green *Luke* 346.

<sup>385</sup> Green *Luke* 346. Luke draws on the image of the weeds choking the seed from the previous parable. Luke 8:14 and 42 are the only two places where this term 'to choke' is used in the Lucan corpus.

<sup>386</sup> Reid *Choosing* 140.

The touch of the woman with the haemorrhage delays the narrative of Jesus' response to Jairus.

The woman with the haemorrhage assumes centre stage and the narrative moves from the miracle of the cure of the woman to her expression of faith and healing. In the first instance the touch of the woman is met by the power of God.<sup>387</sup> Immediately the woman's bleeding stops (Luke 8:44).<sup>388</sup> The narrative continues, however, and Luke has Jesus ask the question 'Who was it that touched me?' (Luke 8:45).<sup>389</sup> Further, Jesus declares 'Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me' (Luke 8:48).<sup>390</sup> Through the narrative the woman is brought from obscurity to view, from fear to faith. She realised that hiding was useless, fell at Jesus' feet and publicly declared before the whole crowd why she touched Jesus and how she had been healed.<sup>391</sup> Jesus' prophetic status is publicly declared to the crowd by a woman who had been outside, untouchable; by one who previously had made the crowd unclean by her very presence. Through her public declaration of her faith in Jesus her

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<sup>387</sup> Luke actually heightens the element of touch. While Mark's Jesus (Mark 5:30) says 'Who touched my garments?', the Lucan Jesus (Luke 8:45) says 'Who touched me?'

<sup>388</sup> Green *Luke* 347 n 103. She is not yet healed. The understanding of human wholeness cannot be equated with biomedical definitions of wellness. Also see above discussion.

<sup>389</sup> Initially the response by everyone, including both the woman who had been healed and the disciples, was denial. The lack of understanding of the disciples is signalled by the nature of Peter's question and the title he uses to address Jesus. See Green *Luke* 348. Nolland *Luke* 420.

<sup>390</sup> Green *Luke* 348. Jesus presents two unspoken premises concerning himself. Firstly, he is the bearer of divine power and, secondly, he is able to discern when it is conveyed to others.

<sup>391</sup> In Mark's account (Mark 5:33) the woman came and fell down before Jesus because she knew what had been done to her. In Luke's account (Luke 8:47) she fell down because she knew that she was not hidden. In Mark the woman told Jesus the whole truth (Mark 5:33). In

healing is complete. Jesus affirms her faith through his blessing.<sup>392</sup> She is addressed as daughter and brought back into full personhood and participation in the faith community, not on the basis of her ancestry, but on the basis of her faith.<sup>393</sup>

The narrative now refocuses on the situation with Jairus, as a messenger from his house arrives and announces that Jairus' daughter is dead. The delay caused by the woman with the haemorrhage prevents Jesus arriving at the house of the synagogue leader in time to attend to his daughter. The situation appears to be hopeless. Through the narrative of delay and death Luke now places the synagogue leader in a crisis. Jesus speaks to him 'Do not fear; only believe and she will be well' (Luke 8:50). Jairus responds in faith. Jesus, Jairus and the disciples move to Jairus' house, which is surrounded by a hostile crowd, who jeer and wail. Jesus reinterprets the situation of death saying 'Do not weep for she is not dead, but sleeping' (Luke 8:52).<sup>394</sup> The

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Luke the woman with the haemorrhage made a public witness (Luke 8:47). See also Nolland *Luke* 420. Her action here is nothing less than a public testimony.

<sup>392</sup> Green *Luke* 349. Only in response to her public testimony does Jesus commend the woman and pronounce her whole. Jesus confirms the woman's story and rules out all possible interpretations of her unconventional behaviour except one – namely his view is that her violation of accepted purity rules was an expression of faith. Her faith has been tested and its authenticity is manifest in her willingness to cross the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in order to obtain salvation.

<sup>393</sup> Reid *Choosing* 140. See also Seim *Double Message* 41. 'Many of the healing narratives have concluding formulations that emphasise that women are now included in the community of God from which they had been excluded'. 'This is especially true of the two women whose suffering rendered them constantly unclean so that they were subject to social restrictions even stricter than those which normally applied to women'.

<sup>394</sup> Green *Luke* 350. Luke's narration is potentially confusing at this point. It is resolved when it is realised that the narrator has reorganised his account for dramatic effect. The narrator orders the events outside of chronological time so as to focus on the discourse with the crowd outside the house and the discourse with the parents and disciples inside the house.

crowds refuse to recognise Jesus as the one who can exercise divine power and continue to ridicule him.

Jesus moves into the house where Jairus' daughter is. He takes with him three of his disciples, who do not yet seem to realise that Jesus is the Messiah, the synagogue leader, Jairus, and his wife. Jesus again violates the purity boundary as he touches the dead girl.<sup>395</sup> He takes her by the hand and commands her to arise.<sup>396</sup> The effect is immediate. Her spirit returns, she gets up immediately and is given something to eat (Luke 8:55). Through the faith of Jairus, the synagogue leader, his daughter is restored to health. Her eating is a sign of being brought back to the community and family.

In the stories of both women Jesus violates the purity rules. He is touched by the woman with the haemorrhage and he takes the initiative to touch the dead daughter of Jairus.<sup>397</sup> Sickness becomes the equaliser. Both the woman with the haemorrhage who was poor and had lived on the margins for 12 years, and Jairus the synagogue leader, the one who guarded the law, were powerless to maintain ritual purity without separation.<sup>398</sup> In both situations the traditional understanding of purity does not restrict Jesus' ministry. By offering cure through the power of God to those who were sick and isolated by their impurity, and by healing and restoring them to

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<sup>395</sup> This is in contrast to the story of the woman with the haemorrhage who touches Jesus.

<sup>396</sup> In both the Marcan account (Mark 5:41) and the Lucan account (Luke 8:54) of the raising of Jairus' daughter Jesus takes the girl by the hand. This follows the Old Testament gesture (cf. Is 41:13, 42:6) of Yahweh taking hold of Israel's right hand.

<sup>397</sup> According to the Jewish rules of purity, set and held by the temple system, any one or anything that touches a person who is impure, are themselves rendered unclean.

community through faith, Jesus was in fact claiming the authority to determine how a person maintained holiness or purity before God. Relationship with God was now found and maintained through faith in Jesus, rather than through ritual purity maintained by the temple system. Jesus created community by setting new rules of purity - of who could belong and on what basis.

### **The Woman at the Pharisee's Dinner Party: Luke 7:36-50**

Neyrey comments:

'Luke both shared a common symbolic world with first century Jews and disagreed with it on many occasions. This double aspect is found also in the way meals are treated as symbols of that symbolic world. At times Luke confirms the accepted order pertaining to meals, but at other times he reports that it is upset.'<sup>399</sup>

Meals are ceremonies that serve to reinforce group boundaries, as well as the roles and functions of key institutions in the society. Meals embody the purity rules that define a certain group and they symbolically replicate a group's basic social system.<sup>400</sup> In Luke 7:36-50 Simon the Pharisee invites Jesus to share a meal. The meal is interrupted by the uninvited presence of a sinner, a woman of the city. Through this account Luke depicts the interplay of two systems of purity, the expression of two different symbolic universes. Simon the Pharisee represents the symbolic world of Temple and the purity system derived from it. The woman of the city represents the symbolic world of faith and household. The intrusion by the woman breaks open the symbolic world of Temple and temple system and poses the question that love

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<sup>398</sup> The basic principle of the Jewish purity system was to remove those who were sick or unclean in any way to maintain purity of the community as a whole.

<sup>399</sup> Neyrey 'Ceremonies' 375

<sup>400</sup> Neyrey 'Ceremonies' 362-368

born of forgiveness, rather than ritual cleanliness maintained through separation, is the true sign of God's presence.

Luke's account of the story juxtaposes an unnamed woman of the city, a sinner, with Simon, a Pharisee.<sup>401</sup> Although the passage, Luke 7:36-50, has a very complex tradition history,<sup>402</sup> the text will be regarded here as a narrative unit. The main tension that is relevant to this discussion refers to 'the relationship between Jesus' final words to the woman in Luke 7:48-50 that confer on the woman forgiveness for sins and salvation, and Luke 7:36-47 that indicate she acts as she does because she has already been forgiven.'<sup>403</sup> Or as Green asks 'When had she been forgiven?'<sup>404</sup> Most scholars agree that the narrative is open-ended – at the beginning. The story

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<sup>401</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 684. The features of the story that are distinctive to Luke include: The story is set in Galilee and bears no time relationship to the Passover; the woman is stated as being a woman of the city, a sinner; Jesus' feet rather than head is anointed; Simon is a Pharisee, not a leper; Simon the Pharisee brings the objection rather than the disciples; Luke omits any mention of the poor.

<sup>402</sup> While similar stories are found in Mark 14:3-9, Matthew 26:6-13 and John 12:1-8, it is unlikely that the Lucan account is a reworking of Mark. It is more likely that the story of an anointing of Jesus by a woman intruder into a dinner scene assumed various forms in the stage of oral tradition, which have been reflected in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Marshall *Luke* 305ff gives a good overview of the various attempts to reconcile earlier versions. But see Jane Shaberg 'Luke' 285ff who claims that a comparison of all four accounts laid side by side is necessary to critique Luke's. She concludes 'In Luke, the anointing is reduced to a display of unusual affection on the part of the intruding woman. A social outcast takes on herself the role of a servant in gratitude to Jesus. But by erasing the female prophet from the Marcan source, Luke has refused to honour her memory. Given the emphatic nature of Mark 14:9, Luke's editing displays real arrogance. Politically, prophetically, what she has done will *not* be told in memory of her.' See also Fitzmyer *Luke* 686. Tiede *Luke* 159. Nolland *Luke* 351. Fiorenza *Memory* 128ff offers a feminist reconstruction.

<sup>403</sup> Seim *Double Message* 88.

<sup>404</sup> Green *Luke* 313.

starts before the narrative, there was some prior encounter when the woman had been forgiven<sup>405</sup> and that Jesus' words in Luke 7:48-50 are an affirmation of her forgiveness - they provide a reason for her love.<sup>406</sup> Thibeaux claims emphatically that the interaction between Jesus and the woman is the main plot of the narrative, with Jesus and Simon's interaction forming the sub-plot.<sup>407</sup> On the other hand Reid claims that the central point of the story in Luke 7:36-50 concerns the interaction between

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<sup>405</sup> Cf. Marshall *Luke* 305ff. But against this see Kilgallen 'John the Baptist' 675ff.

<sup>406</sup> Evelyn R Thibeaux ' "Known to Be a Sinner": The Narrative Rhetoric of Luke 7:36-50' *BTB* 23 (1993) 152. Luke links Luke 7:41-42 and Luke 8:44-46 with Luke 7:47a by means of the *hou charin* beginning v47 which refers to the entire preceding account in vv44-46 as the basis for what he is about to say. The *hoti* in v47 then has the sense, not of reason for something's being so, but of a basis for one's knowledge. Jesus is saying 'Because I can see that she loves much, I know surely that she has been forgiven.' This means that the woman's sins have been forgiven before she performs the loving actions in Luke 7:37-38. Seim *Double Message* 89. If *therefore* in Luke 7:47 is not understood causally, but logically, the woman's love is to be interpreted also in this verse as an expression of forgiveness. Tannehill *Narrative Unity* 117. An initial reading of Luke 7:47 seems to indicate that she is being forgiven because of her great love, although love comes from forgiveness according to the parable in Luke 7:41-42 ... Scholars have rightly proposed another interpretation, namely, that Luke 7:47a speaks not of love as the basis for forgiveness but as the basis for knowing that the woman has been forgiven. Her great love is the sign that she has experienced forgiveness and so the basis on which one may confidently assert that forgiveness has taken place. See also Reid *Choosing* 113. Fitzmyer *Luke* 691. Marshall *Luke* 313.

<sup>407</sup> Thibeaux 'Known to Be a Sinner' 153. Jesus' words to the woman in Luke 7:48 and again in Luke 7:50 are the climax and central focus: his offering her assurance (sure knowledge) that God had forgiven her sins and salvation is hers. The narrative pattern moves from a conflict of interpretations about an event (the woman's actions to Jesus), to an authoritative recounting of those actions (paralleled with Simon's actions) that reveals and confirms their true meaning: not a seeking after salvation but a manifestation of it and an extension of its effects.

Jesus and Simon.<sup>408</sup> I maintain that the main plot is essentially the dialogue between the purity system represented by the Pharisee and the purity system represented by the woman, presented in the interaction of the two characters with Jesus.<sup>409</sup> Although the purity system represented by the woman - that of love, forgiveness, faith and community - is affirmed authoritatively by Jesus, the story is still incomplete. The narrative concludes before we are told whether Simon, the Pharisee, responds to Jesus' invitation.

The narrative opens as the contrasting purity systems and symbolic worlds are introduced in Luke 7:36-38. It opens starkly in the world of temple purity. We are told that one of the Pharisees asks Jesus to eat with him. Jesus goes to his house and reclines at the table with him (Luke 7:36-37).<sup>410</sup> This setting although brief takes the reader into the world of temple purity. As Luke stresses that it is a Pharisee who makes the invitation to the meal he immediately raises the issues of ritual purity.<sup>411</sup> The invitation itself indicates Jesus' social standing as a well-known teacher.<sup>412</sup> The

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<sup>408</sup> Reid *Choosing* 110. The whole story hinges on Jesus' question to Simon in Luke 7:44 'Do you see this woman?' The question that the story poses is 'Can Simon see differently?' Can he see what Jesus sees: a forgiven woman who shows great love? (Luke 7:47).

<sup>409</sup> See Seim *Double Message* 90.

<sup>410</sup> Green *Luke* 308. This means that the Pharisee had sufficient trust in Jesus' ritual purity to share a meal with him.

<sup>411</sup> Thibeaux 'Known to be a Sinner' 153. 'The Temple personnel regulated all matters regarding holiness/purity/cleanliness of the Jewish people, and the Pharisees, laymen who enforced temple purity regulations still more rigorously, had extended the norms of Temple and priestly holiness to all Jews'. Elliott 'Temple versus Household' 211-240. Within this scenario the Pharisee Simon speaks for the temple system, its values and perspectives.

<sup>412</sup> Thibeaux 'Known to be a Sinner' 153. The reader is constrained to see a conflict of values and honour between the two men. As part of the Hellenistic symposium the guests' values and honour are affirmed while the hosts' are negated. But see Green *Luke* 306. While philosophical conflict might occur in the debate following the meal, the 'talking party', even to the extent

meal setting is that of a formal banquet.<sup>413</sup> Furthermore, the literary structure of the account in Luke 7:36-50 follows the genus of the Hellenistic symposium.<sup>414</sup> This meal is a public occasion.<sup>415</sup> It was the place of men, not women.<sup>416</sup> However, almost as soon as the narrative carefully establishes the purity boundaries of this meal, all the conventional assumptions about a public meal in the home of a Pharisee are undermined. We are told that an unnamed and uninvited woman of the city, a sinner, enters the meal scene, apparently before or simultaneously with Jesus (Luke 7:37). The narrative presentation is disconcerting. It continues as though her behaviour was expected and acceptable. But her presence is wrong, out of place. She does not belong in this meal setting.<sup>417</sup> The brevity of this introduction to the woman of the city, a sinner, has led to questions about her status and social standing and whether she is to be regarded as a prostitute. There has been considerable debate

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that the chief guest would best his host, it should not involve any breach of the basic rules of hospitality. The conflict between Jesus and Simon should not be presented as integral to Luke's presentation of this scene as a symposium.

<sup>413</sup> Green *Luke* 308. Jesus is described as 'reclining at table', a detail that marks this event as a banquet.

<sup>414</sup> Stuart Love 'A Gender Specific Analysis of Public and Private Meals in Luke: A Macrosociological View' Unpublished Thesis Pepperdine University (1992) par 50. The requirements include a host (Simon the Pharisee - Luke 7:36), a guest of honour (Jesus - Luke 7:36), other guests (Luke 7:49) an invitation (Luke 7:36), a gradual unfolding of the host's identity (Luke 7:40) and of the other guests (Luke 7:49). There is also an action that prompts the speech of the chief guest. Luke 7:39 when Simon, the Pharisee, said to himself 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.' This is followed by a speech and Socratic type interrogation by the chief guest to the host (Luke 7:40-50).

<sup>415</sup> Love 'A Gender Specific Analysis' par 36. Public meals often take place in houses, they are characterised as banquets or as a feast and are attended by a number of groups who recline at meal.

<sup>416</sup> Corley *Private Women* 31-79.

<sup>417</sup> Green *Luke* 309.

among the scholars with opinions ranging from that of Schottroff who claims that the woman's identity as a prostitute is critical to reading the texts to that of Fitzmyer who maintains an open position and Reid who claims that she was not a prostitute.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Seim *Double Message* 90. It is customary to interpret sinner in Luke 7:37 to mean that the woman not only failed to fulfil the demands of the Pharisees, but that she was well-known as a local whore. In Palestine prostitutes were despised not only for reasons of sexual immorality, but also for religious and political reasons. Luise Schottroff *Let the Oppressed Go Free* 150-153 claims that the text wants to say that the sinner in Luke 7:36-50 is a prostitute. Her arguments are well summarised. As part of her argument she claims that the socio-historical question of the living conditions of the prostitutes at the time the text was written is the unavoidable basis for the text's interpretation. Prostitution is understood from a social perspective rather than a moral perspective. Although prostitutes violate the will of God and are, therefore, sinners, God forgives them and is pleased with those who prevent their hardship. Also Schottroff claims that Luke 7:36-50 tells of God's mercy bestowed on the prostitute, not repentance of the prostitute as a condition of forgiveness. Corley *Private Women* 124 claims Luke describes her as a woman with a bad reputation (Luke 7:37). The combination of the term 'sinner' with her identification as a woman known in the city makes it more likely that Luke intends for his readers to identify her as a prostitute or more colloquially as a street walker or public woman. However, Corley, as does Schottroff (above), raises the possibility that as she is known for her promiscuity that she could also be a lower-class working woman or freedwoman who may have earned her freedom by prostituting herself. She may now support herself by one of the few avenues open to her. Fiorenza *Memory* 129 claims that it was probably Luke who characterised the woman as a 'woman of the city, a sinner' – that is a prostitute. Nolland *Luke* 353 claims the dramatic impact of the woman's actions appears most strikingly if 'sinner' is understood as a euphemism for 'prostitute' or 'courtesan'. He also comments that while tradition has often thought of this unknown woman as Mary Magdalene or sometimes as Mary of Bethany, it seems best to preserve the anonymity of the sinful woman who came to Jesus. Green *Luke* 309 offers the following summary: 'She is a sinner in the city – that is a woman known in the city as a sinner. This characterisation marks her as a prostitute by vocation, a whore by social status, contagious in her impurity, and probably one who fraternises with Gentiles for economic purposes'. Marshall *Luke* 308. The description cannot mean that she was simply the wife of someone who disdained the Pharisaic rules of piety. Probably a prostitute is meant. Fitzmyer *Luke* 688 translates it as 'who was in the town a sinner'. No hint is given of the kind of sins she has committed. That she was the town harlot or guilty of 'habitual unchastity' is possibly implied

Whatever the narrative implies about the woman's status, and I would agree that she is probably to be considered a prostitute, this intrusion is an outrageous act. Further, although her presentation is ambiguous, she embodies all the cultic impurities attached to prostitutes.<sup>419</sup> Moreover, Jesus appears to collude with her.<sup>420</sup>

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in the Pharisee's thoughts (Luke 7:39), but it is at most implied and not openly stated. Unlike Schottroff, Fitzmyer claims that whether she was, or was not, a prostitute is not crucial to the meaning of the text. Thibeaux 'Known to Be a Sinner' 155 states that the text is not definite one way or the other on the matter. Different scholars have different opinions about whether she was a prostitute, and about whether this knowledge is crucial to the text. However, Thibeaux suggests that if she is being portrayed as a prostitute a more plausible context for reading her as such may be found in the Graeco-Roman world and in the Hellenistic period in particular. Thibeaux draws attention not to the possibility of a poor Jewish prostitute as described by Schottroff but to the opportunities for prostitutes in the Hellenistic period as wealthy women, courtesans or companions (*hetarai*). Luke may have been evoking the image of a woman of wealth, perhaps of intelligence and grace, and a certain kind of status. Reid *Choosing* 116-122 argues that the woman in Luke 7:36-50 is not a prostitute. She does not participate in the banquet, and she does not do any of the things banquet courtesans do. She is not named by any of the terms known for such women. It is more probable that the women who followed Jesus and dined with him were not prostitutes, but were maligned for overstepping societal boundaries. She argues that loosening the hair was not a sign of prostitution, that the expensive alabaster jar was not bought from the proceeds of prostitution and that the action of pouring out the expensive ointment does not enable us to interpret her as a prostitute. Reid claims that this woman is one who exemplifies the proper response to Jesus.

<sup>419</sup> Green *Luke* 309-310. Her actions are accentuated by the narrator who allows each to stand out individually and who notes that each was performed continuously. She stands behind Jesus who is reclining on his left side with his legs stretched out behind the person to his right. Her washing Jesus' feet and her letting her hair down can all be interpreted as actions typical of a prostitute. Against this see Reid *Choosing* 113-121.

<sup>420</sup> Seim *Double Message* 91. On the basis of propriety 'Jesus had no choice but to reject the woman and protect himself from being touched by her'. But he allows himself to be touched. In this 'he emphasises community with her and distance from the Pharisee'.

The unspoken presentation of the two purity systems is verbalised in the narrative by the thoughts of Simon the Pharisee and the verbal response of Jesus who then tells a parable and interprets the actions of the woman.<sup>421</sup> For Simon the Pharisee the critical issue is ritual purity, both in touch and expressed in the form of the meal. He has been offended by what he has seen.<sup>422</sup> He judges to himself 'if this man were a prophet he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him for she is a sinner' (Luke 7:39). In reply, Jesus demonstrates that he is a prophet because he can know what Simon is thinking, not because he upholds the ritual purity rules of cleanliness and separation. Secondly, Jesus invites Simon to dialogue.<sup>423</sup> He does this by joining the retelling of the parable in Luke 7:41-42b with the narrative retelling of preceding events in Luke 7:44-46. On the basis of the parable (Luke 7:41-42b), Simon is then asked to make another judgement.<sup>424</sup> Further, the

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<sup>421</sup> Thibeaux 'Known to Be a Sinner' 153ff argues that the basis of the interchange between Jesus and Simon, interpreted within an honour/shame culture, can be identified as the social form of challenge and riposte. However, the general pattern of social interaction needs to be modified in the light of the particular situation and in this case she argues 'I am convinced that Luke (through his narrator), in addition to subordinating the men's interaction to that between Jesus and the woman, mitigates the conflictual nature of their interaction by the narrative arrangement of the story and the rhetoric of the story's characters.'

<sup>422</sup> Thibeaux 'Known to Be a Sinner' 153. In a purity system based on law, the prophets in the line of Moses are guardians of society's boundaries and both know the law and recognise transgressors of it.

<sup>423</sup> Green *Luke* 311. Jesus refuses to count this host merely as a member of a particular Jewish sect within the Second Temple Judaism.

<sup>424</sup> Thibeaux 'Known to Be a Sinner' 153. 'By telling the parable Jesus establishes a pattern of meaning'. 'He then applies that meaning to the present situation by his narrative retrospective, connecting the parable by the semantic field of debt/sin and freely giving/forgiving. Jesus proposes to Simon that the norms of temple/purity system, which is based on redistributive forms of social relations, should be superseded by those of debt system, symbolised by the household and based on reciprocal relations. The social/economic relations of household and reciprocal relations provide a better pattern for God's way of

narrator then has Jesus turn to Simon the Pharisee and ask him the question 'Do you see this woman?' (Luke 7:44).<sup>425</sup> Through the narrative Jesus continues to interpret her actions in contrast to the welcome of Simon the Pharisee. Simon again implicitly is asked to reinterpret her actions and his in the light of the pattern of God's presence in the parable. Simon is invited to accept both the woman, a prostitute, and the new pattern of purity modelled by her, as the pattern that gives expression to the presence of God. The narrative gives no clue as to Simon's response. But Jesus finally spells out to Simon a new code of purity – that of God's forgiveness and the human response of love and community.

The narrative concludes with a final response of Jesus to the woman. In this Jesus publicly recognises her forgiveness and affirms her new life among God's people. Simon the Pharisee is not present in this interchange. Jesus' concluding statement is expressed in the words that are used following miracles of healing 'your faith has made you whole'.<sup>426</sup> She is sent away with the words 'go in peace'.<sup>427</sup> In this she is marked as an example of faith.<sup>428</sup> Simon the Pharisee and the woman of the city have given expression to two different patterns of purity. Luke has exposed both systems of purity in the presence of Jesus. Through the narrative he has shown that God's presence is patterned not by the ritual cleanliness and separation of temple purity

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relating to people (freely given mercy) and a surer sign (love) by which to interpret people's right relation to God (forgiveness)'. See also Green *Luke* 311ff.

<sup>425</sup> Reid *Choosing* 110 is right in emphasising the importance of this question as critical if Simon the Pharisee is to glimpse a new pattern of God's presence, a new purity boundary.

<sup>426</sup> Cf. Luke 8:48, 18:42, 17:19.

<sup>427</sup> Cf. Luke 8:48.

<sup>428</sup> Seim *Double Message* 91. Green *Luke* 314.

but by the forgiveness of Jesus and the human response of faith patterned in love and community through the reciprocal relationships of the household.

### **Healing of the Crippled Woman: Luke 13:10-17**

In Luke 13:10-17 a woman who had a 'spirit of infirmity for eighteen years' was liberated by Jesus, in the synagogue, on the Sabbath.<sup>429</sup> Although there has been some debate over the literary integrity of this passage it is to be regarded as a single account through which Luke demonstrates that the Sabbath is a time when Jesus' message of liberation is experienced as the manifestation of divine will.<sup>430</sup> Sabbath observance was the ritual symbolisation of Israel's election as a holy people since exile. The Sabbath, it was believed, is kept in heaven and earth as a sign that the Jews are God's holy people and Yahweh is their God.<sup>431</sup> Strict keeping of the Sabbath, along with circumcision and diet, marked the Jewish people.<sup>432</sup> These three customs

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<sup>429</sup> This passage is only found in Luke and finds a doublet with Luke 14:1-6. In Luke 14:1-6 a man who had dropsy was healed at the Pharisee's house on the Sabbath.

<sup>430</sup> Reid *Choosing* 164. The passage weaves together a miracle story Luke 13:10-13 with a controversy story 13:14-17. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza 'Sheba - The Power of Wisdom, She stood Upright: Luke 13:10-17' in *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1992) 199, 208 claims that the miracle story can be read independently from the ensuing controversy dialogue. This allows her to argue that the account of the healing of the bent woman has been made the object of male debate about the Sabbath. She continues to argue that the story of the bent woman has become the site for struggle between Christian and Jewish men over the religious authority to interpret the 'law of the Father'. Nolland *Luke* 722. Nolland discusses the difficulties of the account that places both its authenticity and unity in question, but claims that the present narrative has literary unity based on the three uses of the Greek verb λυειν to release/loose. Green *Luke* 519. Green argues for literary unity of the passage.

<sup>431</sup> Fiorenza *Memory* 125.

<sup>432</sup> Green *Luke* 523. The role of the Sabbath in maintaining Jewish identity increased in importance during the period of the second Temple.

set the purity boundaries for Jews.<sup>433</sup> Jesus' encounter with the crippled woman on the Sabbath and his interpretation of her liberation reinterprets the rules of Sabbath purity in the light of Jesus' programmatic statement in Luke 4:18-30.<sup>434</sup>

The narrative opens in the synagogue on the Sabbath day.<sup>435</sup> It presumes Jesus' participation in synagogue worship and draws on the familiar and significant image of the Galilean ministry when Jesus is present in the synagogue on the Sabbath proclaiming the 'good news to the poor' (Luke 4:18-19). It is in this atmosphere of expectation that we find the presence of the crippled woman<sup>436</sup> who had suffered from a spirit of infirmity for 18 years.<sup>437</sup> Jesus sees the woman, calls to her and lays hands on her. The woman hears the call of Jesus, receives the touch of Jesus, experiences the healing of God and stands up straight and praises God. In the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus is presented as the divine agent of God's salvation come to bring good news to the poor and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. So now, in this specific situation, Jesus is presented as the divine agent through

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<sup>433</sup> Neyrey 'Symbolic Universe' 301.

<sup>434</sup> Seim *Double Message* 42. Green *Luke* 519.

<sup>435</sup> Seim *Double Message* 42. 'Both the localisation in terms of time (Sabbath) and place (synagogue) are typically Lucan' and indicate that 'something exclusively Jewish is emphasised both temporally and locally'.

<sup>436</sup> Seim *Double Message* 43. Notes that what is emphasised is the woman's sickness and possession, something that would normally have brought cultic impurity. According to Seim, the scene is, therefore, not primarily a realistic one, but one that allows the narrative to achieve its purpose. However, Reid *Choosing* 165 comments that it is clear from the text that the assumption that women were not allowed into the synagogue is incorrect. Reid, however, fails to address the issue of cultic purity claiming that the text makes no mention of the woman being a sinner or unclean.

<sup>437</sup> Green *Luke* 521. It is appropriate to regard Luke's description of her state as grounded in satanic bondage. This underscores his general perspective on the inseparability of physical malady and diabolic influence and thus on the inseparability of healing and liberation.

whom the bind of Satan is broken and the woman stands straight. Jesus sees the woman who has become invisible in society, bent over and marginalised by her illness, liberates her and enables her to reclaim her place in the community of God's people.<sup>438</sup>

The liberation of the woman provokes the discussion between Jesus and the synagogue leader.<sup>439</sup> The key question raised by the action of Jesus to liberate this woman was what was permissible on the Sabbath? For the synagogue leader it was necessary (dei=) for work to be completed on the six days of the week so that the Sabbath could be kept holy. Healing constituted work and should not be undertaken on the Sabbath. According to Jesus, on the other hand, it was the essence of God's activity, it was necessary, e)/dei, to set free on the Sabbath. Healing was fundamental to the plan of God.<sup>440</sup> Luke frequently uses the term 'it is necessary' to depict the unfolding of the plan of God throughout his story. The underlying issue in this incident has to do with recognition of the plan of God in Jesus and with acceptance or rejection of that. Of the notion of necessity Fitzmyer says 'the idea of the plan of salvation underlies the necessity that is often associated in the Lucan story with what Jesus says or does, with what happens as the fulfilment of Scripture, and with the activity of various Christians'. This *necessity* is expressed by the impersonal verb dei=.<sup>441</sup> In this discussion the leader of the synagogue taught that it was necessary, dei=, for work to be done on the other six days - not the Sabbath. Jesus' action declared that there was an alternate reality. The unfolding plan of God in Jesus

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<sup>438</sup> Fiorenza *Memory* 126. Fiorenza 'Sheba' 199. Green *Luke* 522.

<sup>439</sup> The role of the synagogue leader was to maintain the reading and faithful teaching of the law.

<sup>440</sup> Evans *Luke* 552.

meant it was necessary, e)/dei, in fact it was part of the plan of God, for this woman whom Satan had bound to be set free on the Sabbath.

Not only was Jesus' liberation of the woman an expression of God's plan in Jesus to announce good news to the poor, but it was also the consummation of God's covenantal mercy to Abraham. This woman who had been suffering illness and spirit affliction for 18 years is now able to take her place as a 'daughter of Abraham' (Luke 13:16).<sup>442</sup> The use of this term 'daughter of Abraham' in Luke 13:16 'constitutes an original, though not unique, use of language.'<sup>443</sup> Seim claims that the formulation of the text in Luke 13:16 is an observation of fact, not a bestowal of designation: the woman is a daughter of Abraham, she does not become a daughter through her healing. She is not a woman of great piety, but a woman who has been bound for 18 years now confirmed as a daughter of Abraham and included without reservation or conditions in the family of Abraham. Her healing or liberation releases her to take her status as a daughter of Abraham. This liberation is an essential sign of the covenant, it is the good news to the poor of God's salvation. It pronounces the year of the Lord's favour. It is the work of the Sabbath.<sup>444</sup>

### **Parable of the Leaven: Luke 13:20-21**

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<sup>441</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 179.

<sup>442</sup> See Seim *Double Message* 43 who explores the use of this term as used in passages in 4 Macabees. In the New Testament it is used only in Luke.

<sup>443</sup> Seim *Double Message* 47.

<sup>444</sup> Seim *Double Message* 48-51. 'It is a consistent trait in Luke-Acts that the motif of liberation is central in the traditions about Abraham (Luke 1:52-53; 73-75; Acts 7:6-7)'. 'For Luke, Abraham is primarily the receiver of God's election and of the promise to the fathers'. 'God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled through Jesus' activity and the individuals who are thereby confirmed as the children of Abraham'.

Luke follows the incident of the healing of the crippled woman in the synagogue with two parables about the kingdom.<sup>445</sup> In the second parable the kingdom of God is likened to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measure of flour till it affected the whole. The parable is a form that is frequently used to express Jesus' teaching. The parable tells the story in a way that invites the reader to work out what is really meant, to identify with some element of the story or with a particular character.

'Using images from everyday life of his audience, Jesus would capture people's attention with familiar sounding situations ... But Jesus' parables were not pleasant tales that reinforced the status quo. Rather they were puzzling stories that could turn a person's world upside down. There is always an unexpected twist in the story that invites the listener to imagine God and the realm of God in a radically different fashion than before.'<sup>446</sup>

Luke 13:20-21 is the first of three Lucan parables that feature women protagonists.<sup>447</sup> In this parable the image of breadmaking becomes an illustration of the relationship of God and the people of God. The kingdom of God is likened to a leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened (Luke 13:20-21). Leaven and leavening are mentioned at the beginning and at the end of the parable (Luke 13:21 'It is like leaven ... till it was all leavened'). Leaven, however, has

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<sup>445</sup> Green *Luke* 526. 'Therefore' at the beginning of Luke 13:18 demands that Luke 13:18-21 be read in relation to the healing account. The first parable is about a man who sowed a mustard seed (Luke 13:18-19). It is a parable of growth. From the small beginnings of Jesus' ministry will grow the kingdom of God where people find shelter. The second parable is about a woman who took some yeast and mixed it with flour (Luke 13:20-21).<sup>445</sup> Both have been taken as a pair from Q.

<sup>446</sup> Reid *Choosing* 169.

<sup>447</sup> Luke 13:20-21; 15:8-10 ; 18:1-9 (addressed in Chapter 6 of this thesis).

consistently been associated with corrupting influences, ritual uncleanness and spoilage. A speaker in one of Plutarch's treatises sees corruption and leavening as parallel processes.<sup>448</sup> The Passover ritual prescribes that unleavened bread be eaten for seven days.<sup>449</sup> Jewish ritual forbade the use of leavened products in animal sacrifices and cereal offerings.<sup>450</sup> Jesus cautions his disciples to 'watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees', which is hypocrisy.<sup>451</sup> Paul uses leaven as a symbol for corruption when he says to the Corinthians.<sup>452</sup> To the Galatians he quotes the proverb 'A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough' (Gal 5:9) when warning them not to be misled by another's teaching.

In this parable a woman is imaged as God, the breadmaker. The social status of the woman in the parable is not clear. However, drawing on what is known of the process of bread production we could assume the following. As the woman was involved in bread production it would suggest that she was a domestic worker, a village woman, either a freedwoman or a slave since in the cities bread was produced

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<sup>448</sup> Plutarch *The Moralia* Loeb Classical Library *De Pythiae oraculis, De defectu oraculorum*, translation by FC Babbitt (1926). *De fato* translated by P H De Lacey and B Einarson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959) 659B. 'They say that wheat flour leavens better during full moon. In fact, leavening is not that much different from putrefaction. And if the proper measure is not observed, it produces the same corruption by rendering the dough light and porous.'

<sup>449</sup> See Ex 12:15-20, 34. This recalls the Israelites' hasty departure from Egypt with no time to wait for dough to be leavened. Eating unleavened bread became a sign of membership of God's holy people.

<sup>450</sup> See Lev 2:11.

<sup>451</sup> See Luke 12:1.

<sup>452</sup> See 1 Cor 5:6-8.

commercially by men.<sup>453</sup> The parable images God as a poor working or slave woman in a domestic situation. Further, 'hid' stands out as the only verb identifying the woman's role in the production of leavened dough.<sup>454</sup> Some scholars consider that like the leaven the reign of God works silently but surely bringing about transformation.<sup>455</sup> However, the verb 'hid' (e)ne/kruyen) is not part of the standard terminology for the mixing of dough ingredients.<sup>456</sup> In other instances in Luke when this word is used it refers some aspect of the mystery of the divine realm being hidden or concealed by God.<sup>457</sup> In this parable God is portrayed as a woman, hiding or concealing some aspect of the kingdom of God.

Developing the notion of leaven as corruption Praeder claims:

'leavening is a process including leaven and wheat flour and corrupting wheat flour into wholly leavened wheat flour. Similarly, the kingdom involves a leavening process of sorts, a corrupting of the people of God through the inclusion of outcasts or the subversive transformation of the world.'

Further, she says:

'The kingdom of God is like the corrupting, unclean, or spoiling force of fermentation, the opposite of the ideal community, radical and scandalous in its dimensions, the all inclusive and subversive people of God.'<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> Fiorenza 'Sheba' 215. See also Susan M Praeder *The Word in Women's Worlds: Four Parables Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1988) 11-19 for overview of bread production.

<sup>454</sup> Praeder *Word in Women's Worlds* 27.

<sup>455</sup> See Fitzmyer *Luke* 1018-1019.

<sup>456</sup> Praeder *Word in Women's Worlds* 26.

<sup>457</sup> Reid *Choosing* 174. See Luke 10:21. Luke 18:34. Luke 19:42.

<sup>458</sup> Praeder *Word in Women's Worlds* 33-34.

When this notion of leavening/corruption is held with the notion of concealment, the parable speaks both of a radical, inclusive community and of the mystery of God that can never fully be understood or known or expressed in social terms. God, imaged as a baker woman in the midst of the household, taking the yeast and hiding it in a huge quantity of flour, provides a radical and subversive image of 'the acceptable year of the Lord'. God imaged as a baker woman in the midst of the household, concealing the kingdom and preserving the mystery of the hope of God that can never be contained and owned or understood in the purity system of cleanliness and separation.

### **Parable of the Lost Coin: Luke 15:8-10**

Luke 15:1-2 sets the scene: tax collectors and sinners are drawing near to Jesus when the Pharisees and the scribes accuse him of receiving sinners and eating with them.<sup>459</sup> Luke's Jesus replies to the Pharisees and scribes with three parables told, it appears, in the hearing of the tax collectors and sinners.<sup>460</sup> The parable of the lost coin is the second of the three parables found in Luke 15 - the lost sheep (vv4-7), the lost coin (vv8-10), and the lost son (vv11-32). The parable of the lost coin forms a pair with the parable before it, that of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7) and this pair forms a counterpart

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<sup>459</sup> Praeder *Word in Women's Worlds* 42-43. 'By 'sinners' they mean tax collectors, who were considered sinners for reasons of personal and professional conduct, and other unspecified offenders and outsiders in terms of religious law and tradition'.

<sup>460</sup> Reid *Choosing* 180. Reid points out that the popular presentation of Pharisees as 'rigid, legalistic, hypocritical, and the dominant force among Jewish religious leaders of his day is incorrect. They were one group among many diverse sects of Jews at the time of Jesus. They were a lay movement noted for accurate interpretations of the law'. However, in Luke's narrative, they are presented as opponents to Jesus. 'They serve as a foil to Jesus'. (However, this not always the case as discussed above in the case of Jairus.)

with the parables in Luke 13:18-21, the mustard seed and the leaven. The parables reply to the purity issues raised by the Pharisees and scribes by offering a picture of God's joy and celebration over finding and forming community with those who are lost.

The two parables in Luke 15 compare a man with a hundred sheep (Luke 15:4-7) with a woman with 10 silver coins (Luke 15:8-10).<sup>461</sup> Both the parable of the lost coins and the parable of the lost sheep follow a similar pattern. In each parable the main character loses, searches, finds and then calls friends and neighbours to rejoice. The parables are structured into three parts, a prolonged sentence encompassing a question whose form anticipates an immediate obvious and negative reply, an introduced quotation, and an interpretative conclusion.<sup>462</sup>

In the parable of the lost coin the primary figure is that of a poor woman, who has lost one of her 10 coins.<sup>463</sup> Praeder says:

‘The woman in the parable of the lost coin should be imagined searching for a small amount of money in a dark house of uncertain size and on a dirt and stone floor. The object of her search, one drachma or silver coin, suggests that she is a woman of

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<sup>461</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1073. Fitzmyer posits that the parable of the lost sheep was found in Q and that of the lost coin in L. The parable of the lost coin is found only in Luke, and it can be assumed that Luke has specifically located these two parables together to form a complementary unit.

<sup>462</sup> Praeder *Word in Women's Worlds* 45. Suggests that as the structure and vocabulary of the two parables are so similar they should be heard, read and interpreted as a pair.

<sup>463</sup> Carol Schersten LaHurd ‘Rediscovering the Lost Women in Luke 15’ *BTB* 24 (1994) 68. Luke 15:8-10 provides ‘a window into a positive aspect of the experience of first century village women. In a pre-banking culture this woman is entrusted with the responsibility of

relative poverty; a rich woman would not be troubled by the loss of such a sum. The question demonstrates that she searches with special care, not that she is penurious or pursuing a worldly treasure.’<sup>464</sup>

The parable concludes with a celebration of joy over finding the lost coin. Implied in the invitation to friends and neighbours is a chance to eat together.<sup>465</sup> This is followed by the addendum in Luke 15:10 where Jesus draws out the link between the parable and activity of God. Again the emphasis in the parable focuses on the heavenly joy and celebration over a sinner who repents. In this parable God is imaged as a woman, losing, seeking for the lost, finding and celebrating. This image of God can be compared to that of the man losing, seeking, finding and celebrating. Seim reminds us that the two similar parables reflect the distance and difference between the world of women and that of men, the gender complementarity only emphasising the issue. While women operate within the household, men operate in both spheres - inside and outside the house. Both women and men operate within a woman’s world or a man’s world.<sup>466</sup>

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guarding the family income and so accepts responsibility for recovery of the coin she “had lost”.’

<sup>464</sup> Praeder *Word in Women’s Worlds* 42. Also LaHurd ‘Rediscovering’ 66, 67 reports that in reading this parable with Arab Christian women in North Yemen they ‘showed little interest in Jesus’ apparent use of a female as an image for God and focused instead on the act of searching and reasons for the intensity of the search’. They assumed that the woman’s role was to guard the money ‘earned by men’ and to ‘keep everything in order’. ‘The woman’s desire to recover the coin seemed more a function of such cultural expectations and of the desire to restore the set of coins to completeness than any intrinsic monetary value of the coin itself.’

<sup>465</sup> Green *Luke* 576.

<sup>466</sup> Seim *Double Message* 128.

These parables are told in response to the Pharisees' concerns that Jesus was to be found with tax collectors and sinners. God, imaged as female and male, is not restricted to the categories of ritual purity and separation but searches for the lost and celebrates with those who repent.

### **Summary**

The five passages addressed in this chapter point to a narrative that changes the boundaries and patterns of behaviour and social order that are required to maintain a society's relationship with God.

God is shown to be present in human history through divine revelation and through Jesus' pronouncement of the good news to the poor in the Nazareth synagogue. God is present in the liberating acts of Jesus, of Sabbath and Jubilee, to declare the status of the children of Abraham. God is now present in Jesus to heal - those who had been on the outside (woman with the haemorrhage) and those who had been on the inside (Jairus). In fact, the very nature of God is shown to be one that finds the lost and celebrates when they repent.

God's presence in Jesus, within human history, now calls for a new pattern of social order to express the relationship between God and the people of God. The model of household and reciprocity provides a pattern of relationships that reflect faith and forgiveness, community and wellbeing.

## CHAPTER 8: DISCIPLESHIP AND COMMUNITY

Reid acknowledges that women are found as disciples in Luke-Acts, but claims that the role of women disciples reflects a community where women and men are not called equally to discipleship and mission.

'While it is undeniable that there are women disciples in Luke and Acts who receive the word, believe, are baptised, follow Jesus, and host house churches, their role is presented by the third evangelist as clearly different from that of the men. ... In order to promote a vision of church in which both women and men are called equally to discipleship and to share in the same mission, the Lucan stories cannot be taught, preached, or passed on uncritically.'<sup>467</sup>

Schaberg echoes the same sentiment as she writes:

'Luke's Jesus is the prophet of the Wisdom of God (Luke 7:33-35), but he does not call a community of equals. Women are included in Jesus' entourage and table community, but not as the equals of men.'<sup>468</sup>

While I agree that in Luke's gospel narrative the expression of discipleship for men is different to that for women, it will be argued that this difference is not one of superiority/inferiority and that it does not result in a community of inequality based on gender. On the contrary, while Luke's expression for discipleship is gender-specific, the individual response of 'following' denotes the response of discipleship for men while the response of 'diakonein' denotes discipleship for women. On two

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<sup>467</sup> Reid *Choosing* 52, 54.

<sup>468</sup> Jane Schaberg 'Luke' in *The Women's Bible Commentary* ed. Carol A Newsom and Sharon H Ringe (London: SPCK, 1992) 291.

occasions in the Lucan narrative (Luke 4:39 and 8:1-3), women are healed of their diseases and make the response of diakonei=n. Luke's use of diakonei=n in relationship to Martha in Luke 10:38-40 further demonstrates that, within the Lucan narrative, the response of diakonei=n in relationship to women has been used to denote the response of discipleship. The response of discipleship brings together women and men as the new community of faith. This community is depicted, in the Lucan narrative, as one patterned on the relationships of mutuality and household, sharing in the mission and ministry of Jesus.

The female response of diakonei=n is the counterpart to the male response of a)kolouqeai=n. Within the Lucan narrative men follow Jesus. On only one occasion are we told that women followed Jesus.<sup>469</sup>

Luke 5:11	Simon, James and John left everything and <i>followed</i> Jesus
Luke 5:27	Jesus said to Levi ' <i>follow me</i> ', and he left everything and <i>followed</i> Jesus
Luke 9:23 <sup>470</sup>	The Lucan Jesus says if anyone wants to come after me let them deny themselves ... and <i>follow me</i>
Luke 9:57, 9:59, 9:61	would-be <i>followers</i> are challenged
Luke 18:22	the ruler is told to sell all and give to the poor and come <i>follow</i>
Luke 18:28	Peter says 'we have left our homes and <i>followed</i> you'
Luke 18:43	the blind man was healed and he <i>followed</i> Jesus

<sup>469</sup> There are differing opinions as to whether the use of 'follow' in Luke 23:49 denoted discipleship for women, or whether 'follow' was used merely to indicate that women accompanied Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. See Marshall *Luke* 877. In Luke 23:49 the verb sunakolouqou=sa is used. Cf. Mark 5:37, 14:51. Marshall claims that Luke's stress is on their accompanying Jesus from Galilee. However, see WF Arndt and FW Gingrich *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) 791 who say 'here follow has the connotation of being a disciple'. Against this Seim *Double Message* 81 claims that as a part of Luke's composition diakone/w is not used in the narrative to relate to women as disciples. 'Until Luke 12 diakone/w and diakoni/a are used only of women (and table service) – Luke 4:39; Luke 8:3; Luke 10:40'. From Luke 12 onwards, these terms are adopted in the instruction of the 12 or the disciples.

<sup>470</sup> It is unclear whether some of these general passages were referring only to men.

Luke 23:49	women <i>followed</i> Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem
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Women make the response of diakonei=n.<sup>471</sup>

Luke 4:39	Simon's mother-in-law was healed from a high fever, got up and dihko/nei
Luke 8:2-3	Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward and Susanna and many others dihko/noun from their resources
Luke 10:38-42	Martha welcomes Jesus into her home but is distracted with much diakoni/an; and she went to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me alone diakonei=n.

The structure of the narrative further suggests that the response of a)kolouqei=n parallels the response of diakonei=n. Passages in which women make the response diakonei=n can be paired with passages in which men make the response a)kolouqei=n. In addition, the list of women in Luke 8:2-3 can be paired with list of apostles in Luke 6:14-16.

<b>Pairing of passages where men a)kolouqei=n and women diakonei=n</b>	
<b>Women's response diakonei=n</b>	<b>Men's response a)kolouqei=n</b>
Luke 4:38-39 Healing of Simon's mother-in-law, who rose and dihko/nei	Luke 5:1-11 Miraculous catch of fish, Simon leaves all and h)kolou/qhsan
Luke 10:38-42 Martha who was distracted with much diakoni/an; and she went to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me alone diakonei=n?'	Luke 9:57-62 Men who were distracted from a)kolouqei=n
<b>Women in Luke 8:2-3 paired with apostles in Luke 6:14-16</b>	
<b>Women</b>	<b>Apostles</b>
Luke 8:2-3 List of women who served Jesus	Luke 6:14-16 List of men who were named apostles

The parallel responses of diakonei=n and a)kolouqei=n reflect the cultural norms of an honour/shame society.<sup>472</sup> As the honour of the family/household comprised both a

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<sup>471</sup> In Luke 4:39 and Luke 8:2-3 Jesus is the object of the verb, diakonei=n is used with the dative, of women who were recipients of the miracles of Jesus and then *served* on behalf of Jesus. In Luke 10:38-42 there is a different construction: diakonei=n relates to Martha who, distracted with much *servicing*, complains that she has been left to serve alone.

female and male aspect,<sup>473</sup> so within the family of God, the response of women and men to Jesus was expressed in female and male terms.<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Malina and Neyrey: 'Honour' 42-43. Male honour was expressed as 'courage, authority over wife and family, willingness to defend one's reputation and refusal to submit to humiliation'. Female honour (shame) was expressed as 'discretion, shyness, restraint, timidity and sexual exclusiveness'. In first century Mediterranean society males were responsible to look after their women – 'mother, wife, sister - since their dishonour directly implies their own'. Women needed to be under the care and protection of a male person.

<sup>473</sup> Malina and Neyrey: 'Honour' 41, 43, 62. The honour of the family or kinship group was divided into moral or sexual division of labour. The male aspect was called honour while female honour was called shame. Honour and shame become sexually specific and sexually embedded and were replicated in the spatial arrangements of the household. Females stood at the centre of the household or domestic sphere, while the primary location of males was in the public sphere. The domestic sphere is female space and female things. This is where females operate. They use kitchen utensils, grinding wheel, drawing water, spinning and sewing, bread baking or sweeping out the house. All female spaces and things are centripetal to the family dwelling. All things on the inside are female, all things taken from the inside to the outside are male. In first century Mediterranean society one will expect to find women in the home, in the private domestic space relative to the family.

<sup>474</sup> The male response of discipleship is symbolised by the outward movement of 'leave all and follow' - *akolouqein*. In the individual commitment of discipleship denoted by Luke as 'they left all and followed Jesus', men move out, follow, move away. They leave all, the family home, father, inheritance. They lose all honour and status, as they have left behind all that would indicate their place in society. They are destitute as they have left not only the family unit, but the economic unit - their 'job' the means of production. The commitment of discipleship was a total change in life orientation, pattern and source of well-being. This is consistent with the spatial orientation of males, that which is outside the household and that which moves from the inside out. Female space, on the other hand, is on the inside, in the domestic sphere. Women were under the care, protection and authority of their husband, father or, in some cases, son. When women made the response of discipleship, *diakonein*, their primary identity was given, not by their husband or father and his place in society, but by their listening to the words of Jesus and doing it. Women were healed and made the response of *diakonein*.

Luke uses the *διακον*-verb six times in the gospel, three times in relationship to women and three times, in the context of a meal, in relationship to Jesus.<sup>475</sup> According to most scholars its primary meaning has been given by the English words 'service'<sup>476</sup> or 'waiting on tables'.<sup>477</sup> This has led to reading Luke 4:39, Luke 8:2-3 and Luke 10:38-42 within the traditional understanding of women's role and service in the household and domestic sphere. More recently, however, Collins has undertaken a major study of *diakonia* and its cognates, reviewing its usage in Christian and non-Christian works of the period. He has demonstrated that the primary meaning of *diakoni/a* and its cognates is not given by the word 'service' or the understanding of 'waiting on tables', but is rather expressed by the idea or

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<sup>475</sup> Seim *Double Message* 59. Luke uses the *διακον*-words with a clear preference for the verb. See Seim 59 for comparison with other New Testament uses. While *diakone/w* dominates in the gospel, *diakoni/a* is found more frequently in Acts.

<sup>476</sup> Seim *Double Message* 58. In normal Greek usage the verb has the meaning 'to serve' with a strong connotation of waiting on someone. Arndt and Gingrich *A Greek-English Lexicon* 183 give five meanings of the verb *diakoneo* – to wait on someone at table; to serve; to care for, take care of; to help, support someone and to serve as a deacon. See also John N Collins *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 5-45 for discussion of the ministry implications developed on the basis of a primary interpretation of *diakonia* and its cognates by the English word group 'to serve'. See also 46-71 of the same work for a survey of scholarship relating to recent interpretations of the use of *diakonia* and its cognates in the New Testament and other early sources. Collins concludes that in recent scholarly works there is widespread uncertainty about the character of service attributed to the Son of Man in Mark 10:45. Furthermore, scholarly opinions regarding other material in the New Testament do not necessarily fit the notion of *diakonia* as service. This, he claims, raises doubts about the accuracy of words currently used to denote the meaning of the word in the light of its original usage.

<sup>477</sup> Halvor Moxnes 'Patron-Client Relations and the New Community in Luke-Acts' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1991) 259. In common usage the word *diakonei=n* 'to serve', was linked to food. At the meal, service (*diakonei=n*) was the role of serving or waiting on tables. It was the task of nurturing, usually associated with the women and servants.

concept of 'go-between'.<sup>478</sup> For example in Joseph and Aseneth 15.7 what is said of the maidservant is not 'she will herself minister to them (diakonh/sei au)toi=j)) forever but, she will be their go-between (or messenger) for ever'.<sup>479</sup> In such cases the dative case is used to indicate the sender. Collins' extensive work has shown, not only that

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<sup>478</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 194. See also Appendix 1, 335 for a full summary of the Meanings of the Greek Words for Ministry. Collins presents his summary in five points.

1 He claims that the 'words occur in contexts of three kinds: message, agency, and attendance upon a person or in a household'.

2 'The underlying notion on all three areas is of activity of an in-between kind'. The verb diakonein has different nuances depending on the field of meaning:

<b>Field of Meaning</b>	<b>Verb</b>
Message	To be a go-between, to perform an errand, to deliver
Agency	To effect, to officiate, to mediate
Attendance	To attend, to fetch, to go away and do something

Further, in his summary he also states that 'the meaning 'to wait at table' is not basic but is merely one expression of the general notion of 'go-between' – that is the table attendant goes between diner and kitchen'. The words themselves 'speak of a mode of activity rather than the status of the person performing the activity. They are, therefore, not expressing lowliness or servitude, nor in Christian usage did the idea of doing a benevolent action accrue to the idea of ministering'. The words are also 'equally applicable to positions of authority and dignity as to those of lowly esteem'.

3 'The context in which the words are used is significant for an understanding of their uses as are the descriptions of their field of meaning'. It appears that 'the words were not part of the vernacular everyday use', but occurred in the 'more formal type of literature' or with 'historical narrative, high romance' or 'commemorative inscriptions'.

4 'Christian usage is indistinguishable from non-Christian usage except for the designation deacon'. 'In Christian sources the words mainly refer to: message from heaven, message between churches and commissions within a church'. The words 'convey the idea of mandated authority from God, apostle or church'. 'The main reference in Christian literature is to 'ministry under God,' and the notion of 'service to fellow human beings' as a benevolent activity does not enter'. 'In the gospels the words occur in ethical maxims, parables and gospel narrative. In all instances the usage conforms to non-Christian literary convention'.

5 'The designation deacon does not derive from attendance at table but from attendance on a person'.

the diakon-words do not denote service as their primary meaning, but also that when they are used specifically in the context of table service, they do not refer, in a primary sense, to tasks undertaken by those in lowly positions.<sup>480</sup> In fact, the diakon-words tend not to be found in everyday usage but in the idealised description of the banquet, in reference to religious festivals or in formal situations.<sup>481</sup> According to Collins' work, the diakon-words refer to the activity of the 'go-between', their nuance of meaning being given by the context in which they are used. This notion of the meaning of diakoni/a and its cognates is further supported by the comments of Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza who says that in New Testament Greek the title diako/nouj means not primarily servant or deacon, but herald or official messenger.<sup>482</sup>

Luke's use of the diakon-verb in the parables (Luke 12:37 and Luke 17:8) and at the Lord's supper (Luke 22:26-27) demonstrates the use of the diakon-verb in the context of table service. The meal scene of Luke 12:35-37 is set within an eschatological framework. Luke uses the standard image of the household in Roman times and, in the context of the meal scene, Luke redefines household relationships.<sup>483</sup> In order to

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<sup>479</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 123.

<sup>480</sup> Against this see Seim *Double Message* 58-59. 'The social associations were in the main negative: such service was a task of lowly status.'

<sup>481</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 75-76.

<sup>482</sup> Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza 'The Apostleship of Women in Early Christianity' in *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* eds. Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler (New York: Paulist, 1977) 137.

<sup>483</sup> The character of the household and the social world was reflected in the form of the meal. Of particular significance is the fact that the normal protocols for waiting at tables has been reversed. See also Mary Douglas *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975) 249. 'If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion, exclusion, boundaries and transactions across boundaries. Like sex, the

identify with the faithful in the household the hearer must identify initially with the servants. As the parable continues the socially expected roles of master and servant are reversed. The master takes on the position of the servant – or slave, and becomes the one to provide table service - to wait (*diakonh/sei*).<sup>484</sup> When this parable (Luke 12:35-37) is viewed from within its context as the eschatological meal of the kingdom, Jesus becomes the master who waits on (*diakonei=n*) the faithful. This then is the meal that governs and sets the characteristics of all meals of the kingdom.<sup>485</sup> It reflects the social patterns and economic exchanges of the household of God.<sup>486</sup> The parable invites the reader to image Jesus as the waiter. In this, the parable allows us to see the role of Jesus as the prophet from God by whose word the household of God is established, nourished and maintained.

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taking of food has a social component as well as a biological one.’ And at 273 ‘The ordered system which is a meal represents all the ordered systems associated with it.’

<sup>484</sup> Green *Luke* 498. Green points out that the portrait of the returning master does not necessarily depend on the master identification with Jesus. This link is made as the parable articulates with the world Jesus has spoken of in his message. The identification is made with Jesus in a later meal scene of Luke 22:26-27 and in the current co-text Jesus is identified as Lord by both Peter (Luke 12:41) and by the narrator in Luke 12:42.

<sup>485</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 156-162. Collins notes evidence of the religious character of the usage of *diakon*-words in accounts of banquets and festivals. Particularly relevant to the eschatological banquet is the testimony of faith from Athenaeus and the understanding of God being present at the feast. It is in the context of this religious view of eating in common that Athenaeus employs the term *diakon*. Further, see *Diakonia* 161 for Greek and Roman custom of celebration or feast where the dinner merges with the communion and the custom of slaves being entertained by their masters waiting on them at table. See also *Diakonia* 162 for description of the great feast in Thessaly of Zeus Peloris.

<sup>486</sup> John H Elliott ‘Household and Meals vs Temple Purity Replication Patterns in Luke-Acts’ *BTB* 21 103. Elliott comments ‘arrangements and norms concerning food and meals regularly relates to and replicates patterns and rules of social systems in general and familial institutions in particular.’

The second parable, Luke 17:7-10, takes the form of a lengthy question that expects a negative answer.<sup>487</sup> Again this parable draws on the well-known reality of village life to teach about faithfulness.<sup>488</sup> In the parable the servant is instructed to prepare the meal, bring it and wait on (diako/nei) the master. In this the servant is depicted as merely doing his duty. In so doing he places no further obligations or debt on his master.<sup>489</sup> Here again the meal scene depicts relationships in the household of God. The reader and the disciples are to identify with the servant to understand that in the household of God discipleship never places God in the position of debt.

The account of the supper in Luke 22:24-30 is reminiscent of the Hellenistic festive custom of masters waiting on their slaves.<sup>490</sup> The participle used in Luke 22:26-27 (ο( diakonw=n— the one attending) is the preferred Greek designation among the diakon- words for the ‘waiter in action’ and refers to the activity of bringing food and drink.<sup>491</sup> Through the use of the participle in Luke 22:26 and 27 the narrative presents an image of Jesus as a waiter. In these verses Luke employs the use of similes. The simile in Luke 22:26, ‘let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the one serving’ (as the waiter), anticipates the simile in Luke 22:27 where

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<sup>487</sup> Jeremais *Parables* 103, 193.

<sup>488</sup> Green *Luke* 614. Envisioned is a small landholder whose one slave performs various outdoor and household duties.

<sup>489</sup> Green *Luke* 614, 615. The message is designed as a polemic against the Pharisees. Obedience can never be construed as a means to gain honour and one can never engage in obedience to receive a reward. Seim *Double Message* 82. The motif of role reversal is missing. Although disciples are to identify with the servant (Luke 17:10) there is a twist as the addressee is initially called to identify with the master.

<sup>490</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 155, 246.

<sup>491</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 155, 246.

Jesus says 'I am among you as one serving' (I am among you as the waiter).<sup>492</sup> The nature of Jesus' presence is in contrast to the kings who exercise authority over people through benefaction.<sup>493</sup> Collins concludes 'the twelve are being instructed, even as they hold positions of authority, to adopt the attitude that Jesus' actions symbolise'.<sup>494</sup> The meal reflects the pattern of relationships and care in the new community. In this meal we see a system of care and status provided for by God, in contrast to the system of benefaction that pervaded the Mediterranean world rewarding those who were rich. The form of leadership appropriate to the new community of faith is one that does not expect the rewards as if they are benefactors, but rather recognises themselves under divine mandate. As Jesus was, symbolically, the waiter, the one bringing the word of God (the nourishment of God) so, also, the leaders reflect this attitude.

In these three passages the word *diakonein* is used by Luke. Its context and use point to a wider picture of the relationship between God and the household of faith. Though initially the word is used in the setting of table service, when viewed within the narrative context its use points, through parable and simile, to a major symbolic shift in the locus of God's presence. The household has replaced the Temple as the primary symbol of God's presence from which the patterns of society are determined. Jesus, God's prophet, is at the heart of the household. This is symbolised

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<sup>492</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 156 summarises passages referring to 'waiting' and claims that 'they draw our attention more to the kind of activity involved than to any degree of servility'.

<sup>493</sup> Green *Luke* 768. Green claims that the apostles want to be acclaimed as benefactors. The pattern of private benefaction by which the wealthy were legitimated and given honour and service pervaded the world. The concern of this text is not abuses of the system, but the very system itself.

<sup>494</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 247.

in the role of Jesus as waiter at the supper and at the eschatological meal. In this, the use of the diakon verb gives the primary meaning of ‘go-between’ and is consistent with usage in other sources as presented by Collins.

In Acts Luke shows a preference for use of the noun diakoni/a, using it on eight occasions with a wide range of meanings.<sup>495</sup> The verb diakonei=n is used in two instances in Acts: Acts 6:2 and Acts 19:22. The structure and context of use in Acts 6:2 (diakonei=n) gives the meaning of the commissioned office of daily ministry -

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Acts 1:17	Judas ... was allotted his share in th=j diakoniaj tauthj	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 213 in this context ‘this’ can only refer to apostleship so that <i>diakonia</i> is part of the role reserved for those chosen by the Lord and enrolled in apostleship
Acts 1:25	to take the place in th=j diakoni/as tau/thj kai a)postolh=j	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 213. The latter term, a)postolh=j, is a specific designation of the office of apostolic witness whereas diakoni/as designates a commission to go forth under a divine mandate
Acts 6:1	widows neglected e)n t\$= diakoni/# t\$ kaqhmerin\$	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 230. Although translated distribution (RSV, NEB, NJB) this is not one of the attested meanings of the abstract noun. In these contexts the abstract noun is known to mean attendance on people, or the arrangement of attendance even to the point of ritual. The <i>diakonia</i> of Acts 6:1 is the commissioned duty. So named it is a public function under someone’s direction. It is a daily ministry in contrast to the ministry of Acts 1 which is to take the twelve to the ends of the earth. According to Collins the word diakonia says more about Luke’s conception of a community with official structures than about how the community cared for its widows
Acts 6:4	we will devote ourselves to prayer and to t\$= diakoni/a of the word	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 213. Here Luke has combined the abstract noun <i>daikonia</i> , the apostolic commission (Luke 1:17, 25), with the objective genitive ‘of the word’ to alter the connotation of preaching journeys to one of transmission of the word
Acts 11:29	to send ei)j diakoni/an to the brethren	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 221 noted that the old translation of ‘relief’ has been retained in the AV and the RV giving the meaning that one community needed practical assistance from another. Collins argues against this and claims that the better reading is ‘to send [representatives] on mission’
Acts 12:25	when they had fulfilled th\n diakoni/an (cf. Acts 11:29)	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 221
Acts 20:24	if only I may accomplish my course and t\$n diakoni/an I received from the Lord Jesus	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 212 - sacred commission to preach as in Romans 11:13
Acts 21: 19	he related ... the things that God had done among the Gentiles through t\$ diakoni/as au)tou	Collins <i>Diakonia</i> 212 - through his agency

diakonia.<sup>496</sup> In Acts 19:22 the verb diakonei=n is used with the dative case diakonou/ntwn au)tw= to give the meaning that Timothy and Erastus were the two who were sent out as Paul's representatives on mission.<sup>497</sup> As summarised by Reid:

'the basic meaning of the verb diakonien is to act as a go-between. It applies to persons who perform errands, deliver messages, execute tasks for another, to attend another person. In all New Testament examples diakonien has the general connotation of "to carry out a charge".'<sup>498</sup>

The next section of this chapter will address in more detail Luke's use of the word diakonei=n in relationship to the women in Luke 4:38-39, 8:1-3 and 10:38-42. Kathleen Corley claims that when women serve it is to be regarded as table service; when men

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<sup>496</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 231. Acts 6:2 has been translated by the RSV as 'And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve (diakonei=n) tables.' The Greek attendant does not wait on tables but on people at tables; tables are very rarely mentioned because the concept of diakonia is to fetch for a person. The dative plural trape/zaij designates the arena in where the ministry (diakonia) takes place. In this passage the twelve, those who have been commissioned within the community to the ministry of the word now commission others to the ministry of tables. Acts 6:2 speaks of ministering when authorising the first church-made office. The word says more about Luke's conception of a community with official structures than about how the community cared for its widows. But see also Seim *Double Message* 108. Esler *Community* 136-145.

<sup>497</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 224. The RSV translates this as 'two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus', and the RV 'two of them that ministered unto him'. Collins claims that Luke is saying more than is suggested by the readings from the RSV and NEB that the two men were Paul's assistants (NEB) or helpers (RSV). While the translation of the RV reflects more clearly the structure of the Greek it fails to recognise that the Greek dative has the grammatical function of designating the sender. When this is considered, the phrase διακονουτων αυτω means that Timothy and Erastus were two of those who were, in the course of mission, sent out in Paul's name.

<sup>498</sup> Reid *Choosing* 100.

serve it symbolises a leadership role.<sup>499</sup> This thesis will argue the opposite position - that Luke's use of the term *diakonein* within the narrative context presents women who make the response of discipleship.

### **Simon's Mother-in-law: Luke 4:38-39**

Luke has retained the Marcan account of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law<sup>500</sup> (Mark 1:29-31, cf. Matt 8:14-15), relocated it within his narrative and edited it to fit his purposes.<sup>501</sup> According to the narrative, Simon's mother-in-law is healed of her fever 'and immediately she rose and *dihko/vei au)toi=j*'. There appears to be little agreement among scholars as to what is actually meant by the response *dihko/vei au)toi=j*, attributed to Simon's mother-in-law. Some would see Simon's mother-in-law carrying out domestic duties (Corley, Nolland), others consider it denotes waiting at

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<sup>499</sup> Corley *Private Women* 121.

<sup>500</sup> Green *Luke* 225. Green comments 'Simon's mother-in-law is apparently a widow without sons of her own (why else would she be living with Peter?). See Reid *Choosing* 98 footnote 4. 'It seems odd that if Luke intended us to understand her as a widow he would not mention this, being that he emphasises stories of widows more than any evangelist.' But see Seim *Double Message* 230. 'The suggestion that women who owned their own households should be regarded as widows is all the more remarkable in that scholars, taken as a whole, seem to agree that Luke's interest in widows belongs to the larger chapter of his predilection for the oppressed and despised, especially for the poor and for women.'

<sup>501</sup> Green *Luke* 225. Luke heightens the description of the fever that afflicts Simon's mother-in-law and paints the scene as an exorcism. Jesus 'bends over' the woman signifying his authority over the fever, a practice paralleled in exorcism. As Jesus rebuked the demon in the previous story, so he rebukes the fever. As the demon 'went out' of the man, so the fever 'departs' this woman. Tannehill *Luke* 97. 'Thus the fever is treated as if it were a demonic power.' See Fitzmyer *Luke* 548 for a summary of Lucan modifications. See also Marshall *Luke* 194. Reid *Choosing* 96-97 also outlines Luke's redactional issues, commenting that little attention is given to Simon's mother-in-law as a character in her own right. She remains nameless and voiceless throughout the episode. She resides in the house of her son-in-law.

table (Fitzmyer, Reid), providing general service to Jesus and Simon Peter (Fitzmyer, Tannehill, Nolland), making preparations for a meal (Marshall) or that it signifies the response to Jesus' salvific ministry (Green).<sup>502</sup> Seim proposes 'that the woman, thanks to Jesus' healing, was immediately able to fulfil the obligations of hospitality in seeing that Jesus and his party were served.'<sup>503</sup> Critical to interpreting the response of

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She does not give voice to her own suffering, nor does she speak to Jesus directly. She is identified by her son-in-law.

<sup>502</sup> Reid *Choosing* 101 agrees with Corley, commenting 'Luke apparently intends that we see Simon's mother-in-law as carrying out domestic duties proper to women of first century Palestine.' Fitzmyer *Luke* 550 notes the use of the imperfect tense, which could mean either began to serve, or kept serving. Luke's use of *diakonei=n* is also ambiguous. It could mean, when used in an absolute sense, to serve table, or it could mean to serve more generally. Marshall *Luke* 195 sees *diakonei=n* to mean 'the woman was able to help in the preparations for the meal.' Her help may be regarded as a sign of her gratitude, although she served the company generally and not just Jesus. Marshall also points out that it is unlikely that the use of *diakone/w* is meant to indicate that this is the appropriate form of Christian service for women. It simply indicates the normal domestic arrangement. Women were forbidden to serve Jewish men at table. Corley *Private Women* 120. 'Peter's mother-in-law rises immediately after she is healed and "serves" the men. Here the verb *diakone/w* surely carries the regular meaning "serve at table".' Tannehill *Luke* 97. 'The woman's healing is demonstrated by the recovery of her ability to serve her family and offer hospitality to her guest.' Nolland *Luke* 212 claims 'Simon's mother-in-law can at once resume her household duties ... Free from residual incapacity, Simon's mother-in-law sees to the needs of those present.' Green *Luke* 225. Her response is one of gratitude and hospitality. Her service may reflect patterns of reciprocity but more likely she makes the response of benefactor to Jesus and his companions. As will become evident as the narrative progresses, Luke regards this as an authentic, positive response to Jesus' salvific ministry. Cf. Luke 8:1-3.

<sup>503</sup> Seim *Double Message* 60-62 argues that 'the preparation of serving food was traditionally women's responsibility and task, unless the slaves took care of it. The extent to which women served at table when the family (male members) had guests varied according to religious norms, ideals of propriety, cultural and social location'. Further, she claims that 'the one who waited at the table was always the one with the lowest place in the household'. Where house slaves were common it was the role of slaves more than that of women; but where the family did not have slaves the role probably fell to the women. It is uncertain whether it is correct to

Simon's mother-in-law is the meaning ascribed to the verb *diakonei=n*. If the primary meaning of the verb *diakonei=n* is understood in the concrete sense of 'to serve' with a strong connotation of waiting on tables,<sup>504</sup> then a reading, such as that suggested by Seim, is likely. However, if the primary meaning of the verb is understood in the light of Collins' work, as a 'go-between', then we must look again at the narrative implication of the response of Simon's mother-in-law.

The response of Simon's mother is made within the wider narrative context of conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom over which the devil has authority. Luke has preceded the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law with the exorcism of a man in the synagogue suffering from an unclean spirit. He has followed it by the story of the healing of many and Jesus' rebuke to the demons.<sup>505</sup> The ministry of Jesus is set against the demonic forces at variance with God's purpose for human wholeness.<sup>506</sup> The narrative depicts a fundamental clash between

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claim that when Jesus and Simon were waited on by a woman that it represented a break with social norms. Seim concludes that 'the narrative itself does not seem to suggest an extraordinary situation', but that of Simon Peter's mother-in-law waiting on them or serving them food. But see Collins *Diakonia* 150-156 for description of use of the term in the context of waiter. Collins argues that the verb is used to indicate the kind of activity rather than the particular status of the person performing the action (151). Collins *Diakonia* 156 notes that the *diakon* terms are rather 'designations for waiters and their functions on formal occasions' and they are used to denote the religious character of the banquet or festival.

<sup>504</sup> Seim *Double Message* 58.

<sup>505</sup> Green *Luke* 220. Healing is portrayed along similar lines to exorcism, with comparable language in both cases (rebuke + come out/leave: see Luke 35, 39, 41). For Luke, people who have an illness and those who 'have a demon' are both oppressed by diabolic forces and both in need of 'release'.

<sup>506</sup> Green *Luke* 227. In Luke 4:43 Jesus introduces the idea of the kingdom of God as a statement of his mission. This is associated with the good news preached in Luke 4:18-19 and the spirit anointed ministry of Jesus in Luke 4:31-41. The kingdom of God connotes a new

the kingdom over which Jesus has authority and the kingdom over which the devil has authority - the place of release and human wholeness in community. It is within this context that the response of Simon's mother-in-law must be viewed, not only as a return to the household, but also as a reorientation of her life around the divine purpose of God. The response of *diakonei=n*, attributed to Simon's mother-in-law, denotes her response of discipleship. Luke's use of *diakonei=n* in Luke 4:39 supports this understanding of Simon's mother-in-law's response. With a primary meaning of 'go-between' or 'to carry out a charge', 'to act on behalf of',<sup>507</sup> *diakonei=n* is used in a similar construction to that of Luke 8:3.<sup>508</sup> Simon's mother-in-law is the subject of the verb, Jesus the object, and is denoted as sender with the dative case- *diako/vei au)toi=j*. I suggest the reading should be 'and immediately she arose and *ministered on their behalf*'. As a result of the miracle of healing, Simon's mother-in-law is now able to live under the divine authority of Jesus' word – the kingdom of God.

The structure of Luke's literary composition also supports this reading of the response of Simon's mother-in-law. In the narrative the healing of Simon's mother-in-law in Luke 4:39 has been paired with the call of Simon in Luke 5:11.<sup>509</sup> The story of the healing (Luke 4:38-39) parallels the story of the call of Simon (Luke 5:1-11) and the passage as a whole Luke 4:31-Luke 5:16 has been set in a chiasmic arrangement:

A      Luke 4:31-37      Healing demoniac

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world order where the demonised, the sick, women and others living on the margins of society are embraced in the redemptive purpose of God.

<sup>507</sup> As demonstrated by Collins. See discussion above.

<sup>508</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section on Luke 8:1-3. See Robert J Karris 'Women and Discipleship in Luke' *CBQ* 56 (1994) 9.

<sup>509</sup> In Luke 4:38-39 Luke retains the passage about the healing of Simon's mother-in-law and in Luke 5:1-11 he transposes and develops Mark's call of the four disciples.

- B Luke 4:38-39 Simon's mother-in-law
- C Luke 4:40-44 Healing and preaching general
- B<sup>1</sup> Luke 5:1-11 Calling of Simon
- A<sup>1</sup> Luke 5:12-16 Healing of man with leprosy

Both stories of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39) and the calling of Simon (Luke 5:1-11) include the following key elements:

<b>Element</b>	<b>Healing of Simon's Mother-in-law</b>	<b>Call of Simon</b>
Personal dysfunction	Simon's mother-in-law is suffering from a high fever	Simon has been fishing all night but has caught nothing
Jesus' word - command which addresses the source of the misfortune	Jesus rebukes the fever as he has the demons	Jesus commands that the nets be let down again-into the sea where nothing had been caught all night
A miracle at the command of Jesus' word - the sign of God, the verification of God's power and authority - Jesus is the prophet from God	the fever left	The nets are breaking
A response to the miracle which involves the re-orientation of the person's life, and the linking of the persons life experience with the 'today' of the gospel	Simon's mother-in-law rose  and served them	Simon fell at Jesus' feet  and left all and followed Jesus

Both Simon's mother-in-law's response of diakonei=n and Simon's response of a)kolouqe=i=n are expressions of discipleship - the response to God's plan in the prophetic/miraculous actions of Jesus, and the realigning of one's life in response.<sup>510</sup>

### **Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna: Luke 8:1-3**

The summary statement of Luke 8:1-3, found only in Luke's gospel, mentions three women by name - Mary, Joanna and Susanna - as well as many others who had been

healed of evil spirits and infirmities and who provided for him/them out of their means.<sup>511</sup> These verses highlight the presence of women in the ministering community of Jesus.<sup>512</sup> They sum up the previous section of the narrative and provide an interpretative heading for what is to come.<sup>513</sup> Perhaps more importantly, though, these verses present information that is typical of the ongoing activity of Jesus' mission.<sup>514</sup> From this perspective Luke 8:1-3 gains in significance as it presents

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<sup>510</sup> Seim *Double Message* 40 for connection between miracle and the disciple relation. But see also Seim *Double Message* 41 who also claims (against argument presented here) 'None of these more fully related healings of women ends clearly in a departure to follow Jesus.'

<sup>511</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 695. The passage is best regarded as a Lucan composition as a whole. Nolland *Luke* 368. The grammar of Luke 8:2-3 leaves it unclear whether all or only some of the women had been healed and whether the named women also, or only the unnamed others, provided the financial underwriting of the expenses of the group. There is a textual variant – some manuscripts read him, others them. This will be debated at a further point.

<sup>512</sup> Seim *Double Message* 18, 19 notes 'the repeated emphasis that those who followed Jesus were both men and women (Luke 8:1-3; 23:49; 24:9-11), and correspondingly in Acts, are those who believe in Jesus and are converted (Acts 1:14; 17:4; 12). In many places in Acts there is the almost formulaic description of the community in gender-specific terms'. According to Seim 'the distinction between men and women in collective notices has, in most cases, the effect of rendering the women especially visible'. 'At the same time the gender specification also serves to identify the group of men and the group of women as clearly distinct from one another', giving a picture of inclusiveness with touches of segregation.

<sup>513</sup> Green *Luke* 316-317. These verses gather up previous emphases in the gospel especially from Jesus' missionary agenda (Luke 4:18-19), Luke's summary of his divine commission (Luke 4:43-44) and the reiteration and confirmation of the nature of his mission (Luke 7:18-25). Key emphases included in the summary: bringing the good news, proclaiming, the kingdom of God, the message of release, and Jesus' itinerancy. Seim *Double Message* 39, 41. The generalisations found in Luke 8:2 tend to be characteristic of summary accounts. Luke's tendency towards exorcism gives the healings more emphatically the character of a liberating act and of an eschatological experience.

<sup>514</sup> Green *Luke* 316. See also Karris 'Women' 9-10. See reference to Maria Anicia Co and her work on the summaries of Luke's gospel. The significance of these few verses is supported and enhanced by the work of Maria Anicia Co through her work on narrative criticism. 'A summary is not just an "editorial account" or "an abbreviated account of specific literary

a picture of the general repeated pattern of mission and ministry in which women are ‘with Jesus’.

The presence of women in the ministering community of Jesus is supported by Luke’s literary composition. The list of women disciples (Luke 8:2-3) parallels the list of apostles (Luke 6:12-19),<sup>515</sup> and the structure of Luke 4:31-6:49 parallels the structure of Luke 7:1-8:21.<sup>516</sup> In Luke 8:1-3 Jesus and his proclamation of the kingdom

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segments that precede or follow it in a narrative” ’ but rather ‘a summary may be defined as a relatively independent and concise narrative statement that describes a prolonged situation or portrays an event as happening repeatedly within a definite period of time’. Seim *Double Message* 29-31. ‘This pericope does not deal with one particular situation but gives a dense description covering the general situation. This renders typical character to the contents and makes it representative of the stage in the narrative at which it is inserted’. ‘In the summary account as a whole, attention is concentrated first on Jesus’ own activity, and then on the women who follow him’.

<sup>515</sup> Reid *Choosing* 132. Reid notes that the conclusion from this is often that Luke intends equality for men and women disciples. She claims that this egalitarian interpretation is hard to sustain in the light of the fact that there is no story in Luke where women are called or commissioned. Women are not portrayed as sharing in the same mission as the male disciples. Also Nolland *Luke* 366 claims that Luke establishes a deliberate parallel between the apostles and the women but it is an exaggeration to assume that women appear on the same level as the men. Against this see Marshall *Luke* 316.

<sup>516</sup> Both passages Luke 8:2-3 and 6:12-19 consist of miracles followed by debates, then the list of disciples and sermon/discourse and finally a reference to hearing and doing the word.

4:31-5:16 cures, call of Peter	7:1-17 two rescues from death: centurion’s servant, Gentile benefactor, widow’s son, ‘great prophet’
5:17-6:11 debates, call of Levi	7:18-50 2 debates:
<b>6:12-19 list of the twelve</b>	<b>8:1-3 list of women disciples</b>
6:20-49 sermon on the plain	8:4-21 parables discourse: mother and brother
6:47-49 hearing and doing the word	8:21 hearing and doing the word

parallels the women and their participation in his mission.<sup>517</sup> The gospel narrative clearly includes women in the ministering community surrounding Jesus.

While the Lucan narrative clearly demonstrates the presence of women in the ministering community of Jesus, there is little consensus among scholars as to the actual role of the women and whether or not they are included as disciples of Jesus. Fiorenza assumes that Luke 8:1-3 characterises the women not as disciples, but as wealthy benefactors serving Jesus and the twelve out of their resources.<sup>518</sup> Neither Fitzmyer nor Tannehill clearly identify the women as disciples. Fitzmyer claims that ‘Luke makes the women “provide for” (or “minister to”) not only Jesus, but also the Twelve’ (cf. Mark 15:41).<sup>519</sup> Tannehill claims that the women, at least those who are named, are female counterparts of the twelve. However, he sees the women in Luke

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Luke 8:1 Jesus went through the cities and villages, and the twelve were with him	Luke 8:2 women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary called Magdalene, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, and Susanna
preaching the good news of the kingdom of God	who pooled their resources to go on mission for Jesus

<sup>518</sup> Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza ‘Arachne - Weaving the Word, The Practice of Interpretation: Luke 10:38-42’ in *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1992) 63. ‘Luke 8:1-3 is best understood as a Lucan editorial summary account which changes the Marcan tradition by distinguishing clearly between the circle of the twelve and that of their female supporters. By adding Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward, he underlines that they are wealthy women who support Jesus and his male followers. They are not characterised as disciples ἀκολουθεῖν as in Mark, but they are motivated by gratitude because Jesus heals them. That Luke intends to play down women’s equal discipleship comes to the fore not only in his attempt to subordinate women to the circle of male disciples, but also in his characterisation of them as wealth benefactors.’

<sup>519</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 696. This episode indicates that Jesus differed radically from the usual understanding of women’s role in contemporary Judaism. Luke depicts the women as ministering to Jesus and the twelve in roles that are surprising for their day.

8:1-3 as a 'women's auxiliary' providing for the community out of their resources.<sup>520</sup> Nolland notes the importance of the inclusion of the women in the travelling company, but refrains from recognising them as disciples.<sup>521</sup> The women 'take care of the needs' of the travelling group 'out of their own means', and thus contribute to the mission.<sup>522</sup> Although Marshall claims that the women appear on the same level as the men, he understands their role as that of provision for the apostolic band.<sup>523</sup> Reid tends to imply that the women are to be considered as disciples but she refrains from any clear position. She draws attention to the fact that these verses (Luke 8:1-3) provide the first reference to women who accompanied Jesus and partook in his mission. Reid also points out that there is no narrative of women's call to become disciples, of their being sent on mission or of how they came to know Jesus.<sup>524</sup> Instead, according to Reid, Luke presents Mary, Joanna, Susanna and the other

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<sup>520</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 138-140. There is no clear indication that the women engage in preaching ... although it is not impossible that they are included in the mission of the 70. 'Women in this passage are presented as important examples of service'. It is possible, however, that this arrangement reflects the gendered division of labour within the household. In this 'women had considerable responsibility' and 'their work was essential to family survival'. 'The family was a production unit, and larger households could be equivalent to a small factory with a woman as its manager'. 'The division of labour could be used to support the authority of women'. However, 'the idea of women wandering through the countryside with an itinerant preacher and his band would be shocking' in the first century context. 'Prolonged contact with males outside the family would threaten the honour of a woman and her family'.

<sup>521</sup> Nolland *Luke* 366. He argues strongly that the women although important witnesses are not introduced on the same level as the men (against this see Marshall *Luke* 316).

<sup>522</sup> Nolland *Luke* 365. Nolland claims that the women play no visible role in the unfolding of the section. Their role here is to set the women's role parallel to that of the men and to prepare for the significant role in the passion/resurrection narrative. (Luke 23:49, 55-56; 24:1-11).

<sup>523</sup> Marshall *Luke* 316, 317.

<sup>524</sup> Reid *Choosing* 124, 125. All that is preserved is that some of the women have been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, presumably by Jesus, which leads them to support his mission.

women as wealthy patrons who put their faith into action by paying the expenses of the apostolic mission.<sup>525</sup> Seim claims that the women are not seen as disciples, but are directed to a special function of care that is determined in material terms. The women accompany Jesus and use what they possess to provide for the men, who have forsaken everything (as in Luke 5:11). They provide for the material needs of the group.<sup>526</sup> Shaberg claims, quite definitely, that the women in Luke's gospel are never explicitly called 'disciples'. Luke depicts a female-supported, male-led organisation.<sup>527</sup> Similarly Corley, who claims that Luke's vision of the new community is under the servant leadership of the twelve, writes that the women in Luke 8:1-3 give up their 'possessions' to Jesus and the twelve.<sup>528</sup> On the other hand, Green argues that within the Lucan text being 'with Jesus' connotes discipleship.

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<sup>525</sup> Reid *Choosing* 129-130. 'They are part of a host of well-to-do believers in Luke and Acts': Levi (Luke 5:27-32); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10); Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37); an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27); Mary (Acts 12:12); Lydia (Acts 16:14); prominent women in Thessalonica (Acts 17:4); influential Greek men and women in Berea (Acts 17:12); Prisca and Aquila (Acts 18:1-11, 18-28). 'The use of material possessions as related to discipleship is an important theme in Luke-Acts'. In Luke 'wealth and discipleship are not mutually exclusive', but 'the critical factor is how a follower uses his or her possessions'. In the case of the women they demonstrate their faith 'by paying the expenses of the apostolic mission'.

<sup>526</sup> Seim *Double Message* 64. Whether the women are on the road with Jesus or stay in the house that he and the company visit they represent the basis of sustenance for the group.

<sup>527</sup> Schaberg 'Luke' 286-288. 'Many different opinions are found as to the type of work or service the women may have done'. Some see it as 'traditional domestic' tasks, others 'in line with the mission of the twelve and the seventy(-two) as involving preaching about the kingdom'. Other scholars think that the women were wealthy benefactors. Schaberg continues that 'the fact that Luke presents the women as providing from their resources is important for understanding Luke's perspective on discipleship and wealth'. That the women still have resources means that they are not among the destitute poor. Nor are they disciples in the mind of Luke, since disciples are required to sell and to give to the poor (Luke 18:22; 14:33). The women are shown aiding the poor (disciples and Jesus) but as patrons from outside their ranks.'

Luke identified two groups within the travelling band of disciples, the twelve and the women. However, Green claims that the presence of Jesus' followers in these verses does not imply that they participated actively in 'proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God' but rather that they, women and men, are witnesses of Jesus' ministry.<sup>529</sup> The women are said to serve/provide 'out of their resources'.<sup>530</sup> Alternatively Quesnell claims that both the women and the twelve are full disciples who journeyed, preached and evangelised with Jesus.<sup>531</sup> Karris, on the other hand, claims a particular role of discipleship for the women.

Karris draws on the work of Collins and Ricci to argue that Luke 8:1-3 presents a picture of women using their own resources to engage in the mission of Jesus' on his behalf. Karris cites the work of Carla Ricci<sup>532</sup> who argues that the singular reading of

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<sup>528</sup> Corley *Private Women* 116.

<sup>529</sup> Green *Luke* 317. In this the men and women are being prepared for involvement in mission (cf. Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-11) but are not yet active agents of God's mission at this stage of the narrative.

<sup>530</sup> Green *Luke* 319, 320. The women were required to provide for the ministries of Jesus and the twelve.

<sup>531</sup> Quentin Quesnell 'The Women at Luke's Supper' in *Political Issues in Luke-Acts* eds. RJ Cassidy and PJ Scharper, Maryknoll (New York: Orbis, 1983) 68. Quesnell has argued that the sentence structure of Luke 8:1-2 supports the understanding that both the twelve and the women journeyed, preached and evangelised with Jesus. He argues that in these verses, Jesus, the twelve and the women are three subjects of the verb *diw/deuen* (singular to agree with the nearest subject). But against this see Seim *Double Message* 29, 30. The apostles are given no commission at this early stage: this takes place only in Luke 9:1ff. See also Green *Luke* 317. Green claims that Quesnell overlooks the grammatically more likely possibility that Luke has simply omitted the verb 'to be' to describe the twelve and the women as having been with Jesus. Green highlights that being with him (Jesus) implies discipleship and constitutes an important Lucan theme.

<sup>532</sup> Karris 'Women' 6 footnote 16. Carla Ricci, *Maria di Magdala e le molte altre: Donne sul cammino di Gesu* La dracma 2 (Naples: D'Auria, 1991).

αὐτῷ in Luke 8:3 conveys the authentic tradition and that αὐτοῖς is secondary. By adopting the singular reading of αὐτῷ (Luke 8:3) the relationship between the women and Jesus is heightened and their role in relation to Jesus is emphasised, rather than their service or provision for Jesus and the twelve.<sup>533</sup> Further, recognition of the primary meaning of diakonein as ‘go-between’ and not as ‘to serve’ or ‘to wait on tables’, as demonstrated by Collins, supports the understanding of women

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<sup>533</sup> Karris ‘Women’ 6-7. Carla Ricci questions ‘the scholarly consensus that αὐτοῖς should be read in Luke 8:3’ and argues strongly that although there is equal textual weight for both readings αὐτῷ conveys the authentic tradition and that αὐτοῖς is secondary. In Luke 8:1-3 the English translation has rendered two sentences for what was originally one sentence in the Greek. In the English translation Luke 8:1-3 should be read as one sentence as in the Greek, rather than two sentences as almost all English translations suggest. The singular reading supports the translation of Luke 8:1-3 as one sentence. When considered as one sentence ‘there are two subjects - Jesus and the women - each governing a verb apiece’. ‘And the twelve with him’ is just a phrase at the end of 8:1. It is not a sentence in its own right, nor is it the principal phrase. Most contemporary English translations have enhanced the position of the twelve making the subsidiary phrase ‘and the twelve’ the main clause of the second sentence. This has rendered the principal clause that follows about the women dependent and subsidiary. While Metzger considers the singular a Christocentric correction, due to Marcion, Ricci argues that it is ‘due to the internal data of the verse and its context’. Ricci claims that αὐτοῖς originated with ‘Christians not understanding the situation of the women with Jesus, and interpreting their ‘service’ as communitarian would have substituted “them” for “him”.’ Ricci replies to the argument that ‘him’ comes from a scribal harmonisation by arguing that, ‘if the tradition behind Mark and Matthew had specifically mentioned that the women served not only Jesus but the twelve, the redactors could have mentioned this fact in the context of the passion, even if the apostles were absent. Thus, even if the singular αὐτῷ in Luke 8:3 comes from a scribal harmonisation it conveys the authentic tradition’. But note also Seim *Double Message* 63 for alternate position. She claims that ‘when Luke changes the αὐτῷ to αὐτοῖς and adds the element linking the women’s service to their property,’ ‘the women are no longer seen as disciples (as in Mark 15:40ff) but are directed to a special function of care that is determined in material terms.’ In Luke 8:1-3 ‘we are given an apparently simple picture of Jesus accompanied by the twelve and a group of women who use what they possess in order to provide for the men, who have forsaken everything and no longer have possessions of their own.’

engaged in mission on behalf of Jesus. Karris notes that Collins' work enables us to interpret Luke by Luke.<sup>534</sup> He claims that the best parallels to the meaning of diakonein in Luke 8:3 can be found not in the gospel, where the verb is used in the context of the meal, but in Acts 19:22.<sup>535</sup> As discussed above, in Acts 19:22 the verb diakonein is used with the dative case diakonou/ntwn au)tw= to give the meaning that 'Timothy and Erastus were the two who were sent out as Paul's representatives on mission'.<sup>536</sup> In Luke 8:3 following a similar pattern, the women are the subject of the verb and Jesus is the object, the sender being denoted by the dative case.<sup>537</sup> Accepting the singular reading of au)t% and drawing on his reading of the philological data from Collins, Karris offers the following reading for Luke 8:3 'and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others who used their resources in going on mission for him'.<sup>538</sup>

The Lucan narrative presents a picture of the new community where women, who had been healed by Jesus, pool their resources and participate fully in the mission of

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<sup>534</sup> Karris 'Women' 8.

<sup>535</sup> Karris 'Women' 8 footnote 21. Karris notes that Collins *Diakonia* 245 interprets Luke 8:1-3 in a way that, in his opinion, goes contrary to the data he had brought together in the larger part of his work. Karris draws substantially on the work of Collins but his conclusions regarding these verses do not agree with those suggested by Collins. Cf. *Diakonia* 224.

<sup>536</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 224. See also Collins *Diakonia* 213 for discussion of Acts 21:19 where diakonia designates a 'commission to go forth under divine mandate'. Also Collins *Diakonia* 221 for Acts 11:29 and 12:25 where diakonia means to send representatives on mission. Collins *Diakonia* 222 for discussion of use of diakonein and the dative in the Pauline passage of Philemon 13.

<sup>537</sup> Collins *Diakonia* 73. An example of where verb has a direct object as well as dative of person. Rather than translation of the verb being to do 'service for' Collins suggests the meaning to be rather 'undertake for him' or 'effect something for him'.

<sup>538</sup> Karris 'Women' 9.

Jesus.<sup>539</sup> Rather than the women of Luke 8:1-3 being regarded in the role of benefactors for the community of Jesus and his apostles,<sup>540</sup> or as those supporting the male led community,<sup>541</sup> they are mentioned by name, healed by Jesus and participate in mission on his behalf.

All the women among the followers of Jesus have been healed from evil spirits or infirmities (Luke 8:2-3). They are women who have suffered marginalisation, social dislocation and exposure, but have been healed by Jesus and are now members of the community of Jesus' followers.<sup>542</sup> The women are presented in their own right, their identity given more by their healing and relationship to Jesus than by any standard male relationship to father, husband or son. Three of the women are named: Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna. Mary Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, appears in every one of the gospels as one of the Galilean women who watched Jesus' crucifixion, saw where he was buried and returned to the tomb on the

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<sup>539</sup> Seim *Double Message* 39. The tradition about women's sickness and healing is peculiar to Luke. In these verses Luke does not present the presence of women in the itinerant community of Jesus as unusual or controversial.

<sup>540</sup> As proposed by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza.

<sup>541</sup> As indicated by Jane Schaberg.

<sup>542</sup> Green *Luke* 318 'The presence of these women in a wandering company – and especially the narration of their presence as typical of Jesus' mission – would have triggered questions about their status and role.' 'The presence of women in this band of travellers is suspect; at the very least their behaviour is shameless and quite likely would have been regarded as illicitly sexual'. Corley *Private Women* 24-79 identifies the convention and legislation regarding the public presence of honourable women. She concludes 'reaction against women entering the public sphere was pervasive and harsh. However, whether they were slaves or freedwomen, freeborn or married, Jewish or Gentile, many of these women, along with other women who participated in public meals, philosophical schools, or religions of their choice, did not deserve the aspersions upon their character.'

first day of the week.<sup>543</sup> She is identified, not by her relationship to a man, as was the custom, but by a geographically determined surname indicating that she came from Magdala, a small town on the western shore of the lake of Genesareth.<sup>544</sup> Luke presents Mary Magdalene in her own right, identifying her by her story and her home town.<sup>545</sup> Two other women are mentioned by name: Joanna, the wife of Chuza and Susanna. Neither woman is mentioned in the other gospel narratives.<sup>546</sup> This is the only mention of Susanna and there is no other information presented about her. Joanna is characterised by her belonging in marriage, but the healing that she has received and her relationship to Jesus give her primary identity.<sup>547</sup> In Luke 8:3 Joanna is presented as the wife of Chuza, who is further characterised by means of his position as manager of the estate of Herod Antipas.<sup>548</sup> Through this identification Joanna has been introduced as a women whose financial and social standing is

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<sup>543</sup> Matt 27:56, 61. Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1-11. Luke 24:1-12. John 19:25; 20:1-18. See Seim *Double Message* 32. Her first place among the women was a univocal point in the tradition. In the Lucan text her priority is further justified by an explicit association with the fact that she has been healed by Jesus from a particularly powerful possession – seven demons; Marshall *Luke* 316. Reid *Choosing* 125. Mary Magdalene has been confused in Western tradition with several other anonymous women: the woman who wept over Jesus' feet, demonstrating her great love (Luke 7:36); the woman who anointed Jesus for burial (Mark 14:3-9; Matt 26:6-13); and the woman caught in adultery (John 7:35-8:11). The idea that she was a prostitute has no basis in the New Testament. Nor is there any indication that she was a sinner.

<sup>544</sup> Seim *Double Message* 34. In each of the gospel lists 'it was customary for women to be named in relationship to men – as daughter, wife or mother'. However, 'the man's name does not appear as a component of the woman's full name, but as a distinguishing mark identifying her from other women of the same name'. In the case of Mary Magdalene 'her name did not have a fully fixed form'. Cf. Luke 8:2 and Luke 24:10.

<sup>545</sup> One might presume that she had neither husband nor son, but the narrative does not make this clear. See Seim *Double Message* 35.

<sup>546</sup> Susanna is mentioned only here in Luke 8:2 and Joanna is mentioned again in Luke 24:10.

<sup>547</sup> Seim *Double Message* 37.

<sup>548</sup> See Fitzmyer *Luke* 698. Marshall *Luke* 316, 317.

linked to Herod's house.<sup>549</sup> While some scholars claim that this linkage with Herod's house gave both financial and social status,<sup>550</sup> this is questionable. While Joanna may well have been a person with financial means, her contact with Herod's house could well have been regarded with suspicion and contempt.<sup>551</sup> Further, the context of Luke 8:3 creates a picture of social uncertainty. Joanna is presented as a woman who has suffered illness, who has been healed by Jesus and who, rather than a typical pattern of household living, adopts an itinerant lifestyle on the road with the community following Jesus. Her individual identity is found in her healing and is given by her relationship to Jesus. Her financial standing, along with her financial responsibility within the community of followers, is identified through her relationship of marriage. The new community of faith, an itinerant group of Jesus' followers,

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<sup>549</sup> Seim *Double Message* 35-37. Chuza himself plays no independent role in the narrative. All that is said about him is said in relation to Joanna. As married women receive the social status of their husband, the text emphasises Joanna's social status.

<sup>550</sup> Reid *Choosing* 126. As wife of Herod's steward Joanna enjoyed a certain degree of wealth, status and influence. Tannehill *Luke* 139. Joanna came from a higher social rank and, if she still had access to family resources could be a patron of the group, providing financial support and contacts with important people.

<sup>551</sup> Seim *Double Message* 36. Claims that 'rather than bestowing social status on a person, a position at the court of the client king Herod would have engendered social suspicion and contempt in the contemporary Jewish context, in other words a kind of dubious "tax-collector" status'. In this case the presence of Joanna would not bring social legitimacy to the group but instead 'she would fit nicely with the other marginalised people who support Jesus'. Green *Luke* 321. 'As Chuza's wife Joanna would have shared in the social status of her husband, and as a steward in Herod's household his status would have been lofty indeed'. However, 'status is a relative commodity' and 'within the narrative Herod has been presented in a negative light'. Joanna, therefore, 'does not necessarily possess enviable status, neither is her presence among those who follow Jesus easily construed as a potential source of their legitimation'.

included independent women, whose identity was given by their healing and their relationship with Jesus.<sup>552</sup>

The contribution of the women's resources was an expression of their discipleship. The financial provision of women in Luke 8:3 is not to be seen as the service of women in providing for the material needs of the community while Jesus and the men engage in the mission and ministry. Rather, the provision of resources by the women is an expression of their involvement with Jesus in his mission and their full participation in the community of Jesus' followers. Seim outlines the growing financial independence of women under Roman law and their role as financial benefactors for public and religious projects,<sup>553</sup> but recognises that the description of

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<sup>552</sup> Many have wondered about the possibility of this situation given the place and role of women in Palestine at that period. See Green *Luke* 319, 320. Generally 'women around Jesus were single, not because married women had no resources but because single women would have been in an easier position to dispose of their resources as they saw fit'. In reference to Joanna, Green asks the questions, 'Has she left her husband to join the wandering teacher? Permanently? Temporarily? If so does she have access to continued wealth?' See also Reid *Choosing* 130 who notes that 'many commentators believe the Galilean women to be single or widowed' as they would have 'enjoyed greater personal freedom and economic independence to join Jesus' itinerant movement'. Seim *Double Message* 37. 'Many interpreters find it inconceivable that married women could have left home and family in Palestine at that period'. Some have postulated that the women were 'wives of travelling disciples', or 'named as widows, divorced women or women rejected by their husbands'. Others have solved the problem 'in terms of tradition history, seeing the description of the women at 8.2f. primarily as a retrojection into Jesus' life of a later situations from outside Palestine'. However, according to Seim, the starting point must not be how possible this is historically, but what does the text say? Marshall *Luke* 317. 'The place of women among the followers was no doubt unusual in Palestine, but this very fact speaks in favour of its historicity'. Schaberg 'Luke' 287 raises the possibility that women stayed at home and only made day trips with Jesus, possible due to the size of the country.

<sup>553</sup> Seim *Double Message* 64, 65. See also discussion of Roman women Chapter 4 of this thesis.

women in Luke 8:1-3 cannot be explained solely against this historical background.<sup>554</sup> Alternatively, the role and position of women depicted in Luke 8:1-3 is to be understood from the perspective of kinship categories.<sup>555</sup> Women who have been healed through Jesus' intervention are given a new family in the group of Jesus' disciples. Within this context of family, the women contribute their resources. In this, the pattern of economic redistribution typical of peasant household is used to express the economic relationships of the community of faith. The practice of holding all things in common, practiced by the community of the people of God (Acts 4:32), is demonstrated by the women in the community of disciples travelling with Jesus.<sup>556</sup>

The pattern of life of the community of Jesus' followers demonstrates the lifestyle idealised in the parables of the meal and Jesus' last supper. The women in Luke 8:1-3 found their identity and place in the community of Jesus' followers through the miracle of Jesus' healing. They participated with Jesus in his mission, they lived as full disciples in the community of Jesus' followers, contributing their resources as an expression of their discipleship.

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<sup>554</sup> Seim *Double Message* 66 claims that in Luke 8:1-3 various themes are combined in a condensed manner: 'the women's share in the social sacrifice involved in the movement around Jesus, the new healed life that Jesus has given them in the community and the activity of rich women as benefactors'.

<sup>555</sup> Seim *Double Message* 66.

<sup>556</sup> Green *Luke* 320. These women are exemplars of Jesus' message of faith and wealth. Their 'lives anticipate Luke's portrayal of the early community among whom "no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common" Acts 4:32'. See also Luke's emphasis on giving up possessions and realising property for the benefit of the community (Luke 12:13-14; 14:33; 18:18-30; 19:1-10; Acts 4:35-37; 5:1-11). Seim *Double Message* 77. 'The realisation of property, almsgiving and organised distribution of means' is presented by Luke as 'conditions of the kingdom of God'. It 'reflects the practical implementation of the divine reversal. God is the ultimate guarantor of the system'.

### **Mary and Martha: Luke 10:38-42**

The story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) is set within the world of women, inside the house of Martha. It is located within the Lucan travel narrative.<sup>557</sup> Apart from Jesus, the two women, Mary and Martha, are the only characters involved.<sup>558</sup> At one level the episode is a narrative about hospitality.<sup>559</sup> Martha is presented as a patron as she welcomes Jesus into her home.<sup>560</sup> However, the more critical issue addressed by this passage is one of discipleship.

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<sup>557</sup> The key turning point in Luke's gospel is found at Luke 9:51 where Luke says that 'Jesus set his face' to go to Jerusalem. Green *Luke* 434. The journey motif ties this scene to the preceding concern with extending or refusing hospitality on the road. (Green would see a parallel between this scene and the one preceding it of the Good Samaritan. I don't believe this is necessarily the case but argue that Luke parallels the response of Martha with the men who ask to follow in Luke 9.)

<sup>558</sup> Seim *Double Message* 97. Mary and Martha also appear in John 11 and 12 but the Lucan version shows no knowledge of a brother Lazarus, nor is the group that accompanied Jesus mentioned as being present.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. Luke 9:52-53. Seim *Double Message* 98. Tannehill *Luke* 185. See also Green *Luke* 435. Luke uses a virtual technical term for hospitality to describe Martha's reception of Jesus into her home.

<sup>560</sup> Green *Luke* 435 notes Martha is presented as 'prosperous, independent, and ready to host a traveller'. Tannehill *Luke* 185. Martha is 'evidently head of her own household'. 'Those who offered hospitality to travelling missionaries often became patrons or patronesses of house churches'. Seim *Double Message* 99-100. 'Martha is a good example of a patroness in comfortable circumstances'. However, it is not clear what patronage involved. While it is beyond doubt that the women who were 'materially able to accommodate the community in their house had thereby also power and influence', it is 'uncertain whether this also implied a formal directive authority'. 'Some claim that diakone/w and diakoni/a are technical terms for the leadership of house churches' and that this leadership included responsibility for both the community's common meal – eucharist and for preaching. Seim argues that this was not the case. 'There was no obvious connection between the status of the patron and active leadership'. Further, 'there is no terminological evidence that diakonia was especially

The story of Mary and Martha has raised many debates within the church and among scholars. Reid claims that the tensions imbedded in this story raise more questions and interpretative problems than any other Lucan text involving women.<sup>561</sup> Schussler Fiorenza, D'Angelo, Reinhartz and Talbert are among those who have written extensively on these elusive few verses, Luke 10:38-42. Fiorenza sees that the passage is referring to the ministries of word and table service in the early church.<sup>562</sup> D'Angelo claims that Luke is speaking about discipleship but avoiding any comment on ministries in the early church.<sup>563</sup> Reinhartz believes that the story speaks of two

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associated with this kind of leadership'. Martha is presented as the householder offering hospitality, not as the leader of the community.

<sup>561</sup> Reid *Choosing* 144-162 gives a comprehensive list of complexities and varying responses associated with the passage.

<sup>562</sup> Fiorenza *Memory* 165. Fiorenza examines the text from a form critical perspective, linguistic-structural analysis and a narrative analysis. She claims that 'the text is not descriptive of an actual situation, but rather prescriptive, pitting sister against sister in order to make a point'. Fiorenza sees the incident as a whole as belonging to the context of the mission and the return of the 70 (Luke 10:1-24) and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), which represent respectively the early church's ministries of word and table. See also Fiorenza 'Arachne' 68. Fiorenza recognises a structural affinity between Acts 6:1-6 and Luke 10:38-42. Acts 6:1-6 she claims subordinates *service* to *the word*. The chiding of Martha and endorsement of Mary signifies Luke's desire to subordinate the ministry of the table to the ministry of the word. Furthermore, Fiorenza claims that the rhetorical interests inherent in the Lucan text are to silence women leaders of house churches who, like Martha, might have protested, and to simultaneously extol Mary's silent and subordinate behaviour. But against this position see Seim *Double Message* footnote 91 above.

<sup>563</sup> D'Angelo 'Women in Luke-Acts' 455. D'Angelo highlights the role of both Mary and Martha as disciples. She offers a translation of v10:39 to read 'and Martha had a sister Mary who also having sat at the feet of Jesus was listening to/used to listen to his word.' If 'sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his word indicates discipleship then the meaning becomes more clear. Martha, who received Jesus, has a sister who, like Martha herself, was a disciple'. In contrast to Fiorenza, D'Angelo does not see the story as an advocacy of the early church's

women in the process of conversion that serves to support the discipleship of women in the early church.<sup>564</sup> Talbert believes that Mary's action is illustrative of the first commandment - that to love God means to be a disciple of Jesus.<sup>565</sup> With the exception of Fiorenza the common theme of discipleship is compelling.<sup>566</sup> Stuart Love also supports the theme of discipleship, proposing that the passage is one that breaks

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ministries. Rather D'Angelo holds that Luke-Acts neither forbids nor denies, but avoids any implications of women's ministries in the church. 'Mary does not engage in ministry at all but rather acts as a faithful but silent disciple'.

<sup>564</sup> Adele Reinhartz 'From Narrative to History: the Resurrection of Mary and Martha' in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco Roman World* ed. Amy Jill Levine SBL (Georgia: Scholars, 1991) 161-184. Reinhartz locates the story of Martha and Mary within the context of the sending out of the disciples (Luke 10:1-24), where the notion of 'receiving' and offering hospitality to the disciples is tantamount to receiving Jesus and hearing his word. Martha and Mary, in Luke 10:38-42. As they receive Jesus and sit at his feet they epitomise true belief. Reinhartz claims we have come across Martha and Mary in the very act of conversion, the act of turning to Jesus as Saviour. In summary Reinhartz says 'If we assume that the evangelist is drawing on a tradition ultimately rooted in historical fact, the story provides a glimpse of two sisters in the process of becoming believers in Christ. If we see the passage addressed to a particular community, we may catch sight, however briefly, of women members of the community who would have seen the sisters as role models affirming the legitimacy of their discipleship.'

<sup>565</sup> Talbert *Reading Luke 125* sees the story in its Lucan context as illustrating the keeping of the first commandment. It is preceded by the parable of the Good Samaritan which is illustrative of keeping the second commandment - to love one's neighbour. For Mary to sit at Jesus' feet is equivalent to 'to study under someone' or 'to be a disciple of someone'. To love God means to be a disciple of Jesus, to learn his teachings.

<sup>566</sup> GW Trompf 'La section mediane de l'Evangile de Luc: l'organisation des documents' *Review d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 53 (1973) 145. In addressing the arrangement of material in the central section of Luke's gospel Trompf locates this passage as one about discipleship.

social stereotypes as two women, disciples of Jesus, are included in the private meal scene, fully participating in the table fellowship but in a socially circumspect way.<sup>567</sup>

The relationship between custom and discipleship is addressed as the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42 is set alongside the call of the three men in Luke 9:57-62. Martha's 'serving' (Luke 10:40) can be compared with the 'following' of men along the road (Luke 9:57-62). Both episodes reflect the call of discipleship in the light of the cross and demonstrate the priority of discipleship over custom. Both episodes are located within the travel narrative<sup>568</sup> and are positioned following Luke's use of the word *poreu/omai*.<sup>569</sup> The men in Luke 9:57-61 are called *to follow* but they are rebuffed by Jesus as they misunderstand the stringent nature of discipleship and the degree of self-sacrifice involved. The second and third men (Luke 10:59-61) both delay the call to follow. As a priority, they seek to carry out a recognised Jewish family

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<sup>567</sup> Stuart Love 'A Gender Specific Analysis' par 66. The importance of listening to the word by Christian women is underscored by the example of Jesus and Mary. The meal including its preparation (a household responsibility of women) does not compare to listening to Jesus. In a social world where religious learning, if at all possible, for most women is secondary to domestic roles, the younger sister, the inferior member of the dyad is given the superior task of listening to the word. Thus the story describes the inclusion of women in all aspects of the fellowship meal.

<sup>568</sup> Squires *Plan of God* 168. The verb used in Luke 9:51, *εστηρισεν*, conveys the inevitability of the divine plan. From that point on (Luke 9:51) Jesus is journeying (*poreu/omai*) to Jerusalem.

<sup>569</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 169 notes that, although Luke makes frequent use of the verb *poreu/omai*, it bears a special connotation when employed in relation to Jesus. Squires *Plan of God* 169 n 71. The verb highlights that Jesus will reach his destiny in spite of the opposition he faces along the way. The verb, occurring at Luke 9:51-53; 56-57; 10:38; 13:33; 17:11; 19:28, 36 conveys this sense of destiny. A destiny Jesus will meet at Jerusalem.

responsibility: they seek to carry out the rules of Jewish society.<sup>570</sup> Similarly Martha, who initially welcomes Jesus into her home,<sup>571</sup> was rebuked for her agitated busyness. On the surface Martha was merely performing and wanting her sister to perform the recognised female role within the household. She was seeking to carry out the rules of Jewish society. Both of these passages demonstrate the priority of discipleship over custom. The men who want to follow are rebuked, not because they reject Jesus, but because they delay, they are caught up in customs and ways that reflect the norms of Jewish society and don't give absolute priority to the way of the kingdom of God. Martha is rebuked, not because of lack of welcome or hospitality but because she has been distracted by custom and busyness, and has not given absolute priority to listening to the word of Jesus.

The use of the word *diakonei=n* alerts the reader that the issue at stake here is one of relationship. Martha is cast in the role of a disciple. While this account of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) uses the verb *diakonei=n* as do the previous passages in Luke 4:39 and 8:1-3, both the context and the sentence construction in this passage is significantly different. In the presence of the Lord, Martha remains clearly the one

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<sup>570</sup> Marshall *Luke* 411. 'Burial of the dead was a religious duty that took precedence over all others, including study of the Law'. 'Burial of a father was a religious duty of utmost importance'. 'To leave it undone was considered scandalous to a Jew'.

<sup>571</sup> The consistent use of *ο( ku/rioj* throughout the passage characterises Jesus as the authoritative Lord of the community. See also Marshall *Luke* 285, 452. Veronica Lawson 'Scraps of sustenance for the journey out of patriarchy: Acts 1:1-14 in feminist perspective' in *Freedom and Entrapment: Women thinking theology* eds. Maryanne Confoy, Dorothy A Lee and Joan Nowotny (Victoria: Dove, 1995) 161. See also Fiorenza 'Arachne' 61-62. Seim *Double Message* 100.

both directing the service and demanding Mary's involvement.<sup>572</sup> The context of use of *diakonein* in this context indicates that Martha's service, in this instance, was not being carried out on behalf of Jesus.<sup>573</sup> While Martha is the subject of the verb *diakonein*, Jesus is not the object and there is no following object/person/noun in the dative case to denote sender. The service in which Martha was engaged did not derive from her relationship with Jesus, but was conditioned by custom and carried out with fuss and agitation.

Martha's response must also be set alongside that of Mary. While Martha is taken up with fuss and busyness, Mary is cast as the one who sits at the Lord's feet and listens to his word (Luke 10:39). In this description Mary is cast in the role of a pupil sitting at the feet of a teacher.<sup>574</sup> In times when study of the Law was the role of men, and concern for domestic duty the role of women, the narrative places a woman in the

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<sup>572</sup> Seim *Double Message* 103. 'Martha is the protagonist of the story. Her activity is emphasised with vivid words' (Luke 10:40), and she is reported directly in her rebuke of Mary, and she rebukes Jesus for his 'lack of interest in the division of labour'. Martha takes for granted 'that priority belongs to the service that she carries out'. Seim *Double Message* 108 comments that 'when Martha demands Mary's help, her indignation is quite reasonable by conventional standards, and it is surprising when Jesus' authority is engaged to allow Mary to remain where she is'.

<sup>573</sup> In fact this is the point of the narrative, and the basis of the contrast between Martha's activity and that of Mary.

<sup>574</sup> Seim *Double Message* 101. 'The role of the student in which Mary is placed goes beyond the normal opportunity for women to hear the word in the context of worship'. Furthermore, 'the text here alludes to terms which in rabbinic tradition are connected with teaching institutions. A thanksgiving in b.BerIV 2b employs 'lot', 'part' in relation to a pupil at a place of teaching and about the obligation of rising early for the word of the Law', showing that it is 'the student's lot that is good and praiseworthy'. 'Lot' is further clarified as referring to the student's preference for study of the Law.

position of listening to the word of the Lord.<sup>575</sup> This scene also raises the conflict between domestic responsibility and listening to the word of the Lord. Jesus indicates that Mary has chosen the good portion (Luke 10:41-42).<sup>576</sup> In this, Luke has not only cast Mary in the role of a disciple, but has also set the priority of discipleship as listening to the word of the Lord.<sup>577</sup>

In the story of Mary and Martha the fundamental priority for discipleship is set. Listening to the word of God is the basis of service or ministry. Fiorenza claims that ‘the Lucan account is not concerned with the two women as individuals; rather, it is interested in them as representatives of two competing types or roles of discipleship: *diakonia*- service and *listening to the word*’.<sup>578</sup> Alternatively, Seim claims that Luke’s interest is to set a priority, so that the one service is subordinated to the other.<sup>579</sup> In this account Luke is not concerned with competing expressions of service, but with the basis of discipleship. Women are called, in their own right, against the pressures of custom, to listen to the word of the Lord as the basis of their discipleship.

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<sup>575</sup> See also Chapter 4 above.

<sup>576</sup> Marshall *Luke* 452 for discussion of text-critical problems relating to these verses. See also Seim *Double Message* 107. If, as Seim has argued, the expression  $\eta \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\eta \mu\epsilon\rho\iota\varsigma$  alludes to Jewish terminology and to an assessment of the study of the Law as obviously the best choice, then Mary’s choice of  $\tau\eta\nu \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\eta\nu \mu\epsilon\rho\iota\delta\alpha$  simply iterates that she has chosen to concentrate on the word.

<sup>577</sup> Green *Luke* 435. Mary is positioned ‘at the Lord’s feet’. This signifies her submissiveness and her status as a disciple. Further, she is depicted as ‘listening to his words’. For the third gospel, ‘to listen to the word’ is to ‘join the road of discipleship’.

<sup>578</sup> Fiorenza ‘Arachne’ 60. These comments refer to the effects of a form-critical reading of the above passage.

<sup>579</sup> Seim *Double Message* 108.

### **The Word of God and the New Community: Luke 8:19-21 and 11:27-28**

Two additional passages, Luke 8:19-21 and 11:27-28, underscore the importance of listening to and keeping the word of God as the basis of discipleship and membership in the new community of faith.

### **Jesus' Mother and Brothers: Luke 8:19-21**

In Luke 8:19-21 Luke redefines family on the basis of hearing the word and doing it. The disciples and a crowd of people surround Jesus when his mother and brothers approach him.<sup>580</sup> Jesus rejects the claims of his biological family and uses their arrival as the opportunity to redefine the basis of kinship in the hearing of those who were with him – the disciples and the crowd. Jesus transfers the categories of kinship from those of the biological family to those who listen to the word of God and act on it. Jesus does not exclude his biological family, but includes them on a different basis – that of hearing the word and doing it.<sup>581</sup> His mother no longer finds identity by merely being the mother of Jesus. Rather the identity of motherhood is found in response to the word of God. Similarly the relationship of sibling is also found in relationship to the word.<sup>582</sup> Given the identification of the word of God with Jesus'

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<sup>580</sup> This passage has been taken from Mark. Luke has transposed Mark 3:31-35 and adapted it to suit his purposes. He has omitted Mark 3:20-21 that states that Jesus' family has come to Jesus because they considered him to be 'beside himself'. Unlike either Matthew or Mark Luke omits any reference to sister.

<sup>581</sup> Seim *Double Message* 67. The new family does not merely surpass the old, but replaces it. But see Fitzmyer *Luke* 723 who claims that Jesus does not imply a denial of family ties or kin, Luke has enhanced the role of family and has imbued it with new significance.

<sup>582</sup> Seim *Double Message* 67, 68. While Matthew and Mark define family as mother, brother and sisters, Luke gives only two categories – mh/thr mou kai/ a)delfoi/. Luke's use of the plural a)delfoi, instead of the singular form used by the other evangelists, can be read inclusively to mean siblings – brothers and sisters.

own ministry, the primary focus of kinship is a person's response to the words of Jesus. By hearing and doing the word of God, people become family with Jesus and are, therefore, linked to one another as family.

### **The Woman in the Crowd: Luke 11:27-28)**

The comment made by the woman in the crowd draws on the traditional Jewish synecdoche, normally used in expressions of praise for a mother.<sup>583</sup> Through Jesus' reply Luke is able to redefine the basis for blessing. Jesus' mother, an ideal disciple, is no longer blessed and praised simply for giving birth and nurture to a son such as Jesus.<sup>584</sup> Rather, her blessing lies in hearing and keeping the word of God. The blessing of motherhood is now found through relationship with the word of God.

### **Summary**

In the gendered society of the first century Mediterranean world, Luke has expressed discipleship in gender-specific terms. The response of women to serve/minister (*diakonei=n*) parallels the response of men to follow (*(a)kolouqei=n*). Both denote the response of discipleship.

Simon's mother-in-law's response to the healing of Jesus (Luke 4:38-39) parallels the response of Simon (Luke 5:1-11) to the miraculous catch of fish. Both become disciples of Jesus. The women from Galilee (Luke 8:1-3) and the apostles (Luke 6:12-

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<sup>583</sup> Seim *Double Message* 114. An almost exact parallel is found in rabbinic literature: GnR98, 62d. Green *Luke* 460. It is also reminiscent of material in the Lucan birth narrative. Cf. Elizabeth's announcement in Luke 1:45.

<sup>584</sup> In Jewish tradition the mother was recognised as the one who nurtured life. She gave birth, and she maintained life through breastfeeding the baby that was too young to receive nourishment in any other form.

19) both become part of the itinerant community of Jesus' followers. The new community of disciples form family-type relationships with Jesus and then with each other. On behalf of Jesus, women engage with him in his ministry. Martha (Luke 10:38-42) and the men along the road (Luke 9:57-61) are caught in wanting to be disciples but failing to see the full implications. Discipleship, *following* and *ministering*, requires a person to step outside the social constraints of custom to embrace a new pattern of life and society in the kingdom of God.

The new community becomes family whose bonds are formed because they hear and do the words of God. They share their resources and offer mutual support following the pattern of relationships typical of the household. Membership in the family of Jesus no longer depends on birth, biological family or kinship, social status or gender, but on relationship to God through hearing and doing the words of Jesus. Women become full members of this community. They hear and do the words of Jesus and engage with him in his mission.

## CHAPTER 9: WOMEN AND THE CROSS

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Two groups of women are identified in relationship to Jesus' death: the daughters of Jerusalem and the women from Galilee. Through the narrative of the daughters of Jerusalem Luke portrays the consequences of Jesus' death for Jerusalem. In contrast, it is through the narrative of the women from Galilee that Luke announces that Jesus is alive and depicts the hope of the new community of faith.

The daughters of Jerusalem (Luke 23:27-31) are located in the narrative as part of the crowd of people following Jesus to his execution. According to Luke, Jesus turns to these women and prophesies that they will come to praise as blessed 'the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never gave suck' (Luke 23:29).<sup>585</sup> Jesus' words to the daughters of Jerusalem reveal the fate awaiting the people of Jerusalem who failed to recognise Jesus for who he is.<sup>586</sup> In these verses (Luke 23:27-31) Luke presents a situation similar to that of the woman in the crowd in Luke 11:27 where

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<sup>585</sup> Seim *Double Message* 205. 'Jesus' words to the daughters of Jerusalem (Lk 23:27-30) include a negative form of the beatitude' spoken by the women in the crowd at Luke 11:27. Jesus' word, when correcting this beatitude, drew attention to the priority of listening to the word of God as the foundation for blessing (rather than procreation). In this instance (Luke 23:29) Jesus' words are the opposite of the established value of procreation – blessed is the womb that bore him and the breasts he sucked.

<sup>586</sup> Marshall *Luke* 862. This passage falls into the pattern of warnings to Jerusalem found earlier in the gospel: Luke 11:49-51; 13:1-5; 13:34ff; 19:41-44; 21:20-24. Some have claimed that the Jerusalem' women also represent all that Jerusalem now stood for. The women symbolically represent the city of Jerusalem. But against this see Seim *Double Message* 206-207. Also Fitzmyer *Luke* 1498 who comments that 'the mourning female inhabitants of Jerusalem are addressed by Jesus with a term often used in the Old Testament', Isaiah 37:22, Zeph 3:14, Zech 9:9. The connotation differs here as a note of sadness about the daughters of the city where Jesus meets his own destiny.

Jesus takes her words of blessing and reinterprets them to express a more fundamental truth. In Luke 23:27-31 the daughters of Jerusalem are depicted as sympathetic to Jesus.<sup>587</sup> They are shown weeping and lamenting his death and, as such, could well be depicted as professional mourners.<sup>588</sup> In response to the grief they express in association with Jesus' death, Jesus speaks of a deeper reality – the future trauma and tribulation for Jerusalem. Jesus neither condemns the women, nor identifies them symbolically with Jerusalem.<sup>589</sup> His words point to another time and another reality where people would prefer not to have children than to see their suffering.<sup>590</sup> Through Jesus' words in Luke 23:28 the established notion of blessing has been reversed. In the time to come, women will be blessed who have no children.<sup>591</sup> Such will be the fate of Jerusalem following the death of Jesus. The women, the daughters of Jerusalem, are caught in this situation. They are the victims of a wider reality and, as such, their weeping is more properly reserved for themselves.<sup>592</sup> Seim notes that the daughters of Jerusalem are women whose lives are bound by 'the conditions of life that will intensify their suffering in times of

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<sup>587</sup> Marshall *Luke* 863. The crowd appear as sympathisers with Jesus. See also Seim *Double Message* 207. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1497.

<sup>588</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1495. The daughters of Jerusalem come out in the character of professional mourners to bewail in anticipation of the fate of Jesus. Marshall *Luke* 864. The presence of mourning women was commonplace. This action was one of religious merit.

<sup>589</sup> Seim *Double Message* 207.

<sup>590</sup> Marshall *Luke* 864. The thought is of the fate of both women and their children, the fighting men who would especially suffer in time of war.

<sup>591</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1496. Underlying this beatitude is the Jewish notion that a childless woman was cursed.

<sup>592</sup> Green *Luke* 816-817. Argues that although Jesus' words to the daughters of Jerusalem constitute an oracle of judgement sealing the fate of Jerusalem, the fate of the inhabitants of the city is not tied to its destruction. They have the opportunity to respond to Jesus with repentance. See also Karris *Luke* 94 who also sums up the major thrust of Luke 23:27-31 as Jesus' prophetic warning that the people must repent.

apocalyptic tribulation.<sup>593</sup> Through Jesus' response to the daughters of Jerusalem, those bound by the conditions of family obligations, the Lucan narrative announces the irony of the cross. As Jesus is about to face his destiny in Jerusalem so, just as surely, will the destiny of Jerusalem be revealed by his death. It is those who claim the path of life, but reject Jesus as the prophet from God, who are on the inevitable path of death.

The daughters of Jerusalem can be compared with the women from Galilee. Both groups of women are depicted as following Jesus as he travels to the cross. However, while the daughters of Jerusalem are caught into the life and conditions of family and responsibility in the city that has failed to recognise Jesus as the prophet from God, the women from Galilee are among those who constitute Jesus' followers, the community of his disciples.<sup>594</sup> The women from Galilee re-enter the narrative in Luke 23:49. In addition to Luke 8:1-3, the Lucan narrative identifies the women from Galilee on three occasions: in Luke 23:49 at the crucifixion of Jesus, in Luke 23:55 at his burial and in Luke 24:6 in the empty tomb.<sup>595</sup> The women from Galilee provide a critical linkage between Jesus' Galilean ministry, his crucifixion, burial and

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<sup>593</sup> Seim *Double Message* 208.

<sup>594</sup> Seim *Double Message* 207. As such, their primary relationship to the word of God transforms their obligations and relationships to the biological family. For women this means that their reproductive functions cease and they are portrayed as women with autonomous mobility not subordinated to family responsibilities.

<sup>595</sup> Seim *Double Message* 149. The repeated reference to the women following Jesus from Galilee corresponds to the threefold association of the passion predictions within the Easter narrative that is unique to Luke.

resurrection.<sup>596</sup> They play a central role in the narrative of the human response to Jesus' death, they are first to proclaim his resurrection, they become the nucleus of the new believing community, and they are commissioned as witnesses along with the twelve and the others in Luke 24:48.

Jesus' crucifixion reveals God's purpose, Jesus' identity and it brings the conflict in Luke's gospel into clear focus.<sup>597</sup> In the Lucan narrative Jesus' death is set within a broad cosmic perspective. It is accompanied by two portents, signs of God's divine providence.<sup>598</sup> The apostles are absent but the women from Galilee are present as

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<sup>596</sup> Seim *Double Message* 28. Note Luke 8:1-3 the passage in Luke that precludes Luke 23:49. It is probable that Mark 15:40ff in Luke's text has been distributed over both Luke 23:49b and 8:2ff.

<sup>597</sup> Conflict in Luke's Gospel is intrinsic to the message. In Luke 2:34 Simeon said to Mary 'this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel'. As part of the synagogue proclamation in Luke 4:16-30 Jesus is caught again in the midst of controversy. This element of conflict continues throughout the gospel. It is symbolised by the conflicting institutions of Temple and household, by the conflicting boundaries of clean and unclean, by the conflicting responses of those who receive Jesus as God's prophet - the one who fulfils the plan of God, and those who reject Jesus. Jesus is at the heart of the conflict about how God is to be known and obeyed in Israel. The conflict which has been present throughout the gospel intensifies as Jesus enters Jerusalem and he and the chief priests, scribes and Temple elders become involved in the question of the gospel - is Jesus the prophet from God or is his claim false? The conflict in Jerusalem, originally between Jesus and the priests, scribes and temple system, broadens to include others. In Luke 22:3 Satan enters Judas, one of the twelve, who colludes with the chief priests and temple officers to betray Jesus. Together with the Roman authorities, and finally with the support of the people, Jesus is condemned to death. He is crucified.

<sup>598</sup> Marshall *Luke* 873. Squires *Plan of God* 96 n98. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1514. Tannehill *Luke* 344. The darkness over the whole land can be seen as a symbol of God's displeasure. The splitting of the temple curtain in two (Luke 23:44-45) is an indication of divine providence. Both signs indicate the temporary absence of God's reign. Jesus' death will have an ominous effect on the whole land and on the Jerusalem Temple. As Jesus' death approaches, the darkness at

witnesses.<sup>599</sup> The responses of the centurion and the crowd are set in parallel.<sup>600</sup> The Roman centurion praises God and declares Jesus' innocence (Luke 23:47).<sup>601</sup> The crowd gaze at what is taking place and return home expressing their grief (Luke 23:48).<sup>602</sup> Luke records that 'all his acquaintances and the women who had followed

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midday suggests that Satan is fully in control. Yet before the portents in vv 44-45 there are signs that God's saving purpose continues. The veil that separated the holiness of God from the outside world had been broken. The holiness of the Temple, the symbolic centre of the Jewish world had been destroyed.

<sup>599</sup> Those opposed to Jesus are not present as witnesses at the crucifixion in Luke's narrative.

<sup>600</sup> Green *Luke* 826.

When the centurion	When the crowds
saw what had taken place	saw what had taken place
he praised God and said	they returned home beating their breasts

<sup>601</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1519. The Gentile centurion represented the occupying power of Rome, present at the execution of Jesus. He was a subordinate of Pilate in the Praetorium. The centurion saw what had taken place. He responded by offering praise to God and declaring Jesus' innocence. Luke has chosen not to follow Mark's account where the centurion said 'truly this man was the Son of God' (Mark 27:54) but has drawn on a tradition from L. On the lips of the historical centurion *di/kaioj* would have meant 'innocent'. This meaning is found in the Septuagint where it translates the Hebrew as clean or guiltless (Proverbs 6:17, Joel 4:19, Jonah 1:14). Fitzmyer *Luke* 1520. Tannehill *Luke* 347 claims *di/kaioj* would have meant righteous one - a significant title for Jesus - the one foretold by the prophets. Cf. Nolland *Luke* 1159 for alternative position. Jesus, at his death, would have been regarded as anything but pure or clean. Yet this declaration by the centurion places Jesus outside the temple rules of clean and unclean, and recognises him as the prophet from God. Jesus the one who is dead, the ultimate impurity according to the Jewish temple system, is declared clean, pure. He is guiltless. See also Trompf *Early Christian Historiography* 130.

<sup>602</sup> Marshall *Luke* 876. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1515, 1520. The crowds are only recorded in Luke's Gospel. They are those who came together and gaze at what is taking place as though it were a spectacle and go away beating their breasts (v48). But see Green *Luke* 827 who gives a slightly more positive position to the crowds. This is an expression of their grief at such a sight.

him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things' (Luke 23:49).<sup>603</sup> While some have claimed that 'all his acquaintances' includes both male disciples and apostles from Galilee,<sup>604</sup> the text clarifies that, among those present at the crucifixion, it is only the women who have followed from Galilee,<sup>605</sup> and it is only the women who are recorded as 'seeing'.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> Mark also includes the women as witnesses to the crucifixion (Mark 15:40-41). While Mark includes the women by name, Luke omits the names. Luke retains their importance as women who had been with him in Galilee, but delays mentioning them by name until Luke 24:10. Seim *Double Message* 148. The information that the women followed from Galilee is the only information from Mark about the group that Luke has kept in its original place.

<sup>604</sup> Green *Luke* 828. 'All his acquaintances' is a probable reference to the disciples and likely includes the apostles themselves. (Green does, however, note that Luke draws particular attention only to the women, indicating that they had followed him from Galilee.) Fitzmyer *Luke* 1520 includes disciples, but does not mention the apostles in the group of acquaintances. Similarly Marshall *Luke* 876. The reference is to Jesus' friends rather than his relatives and is meant to include such of his disciples as were there. Reid *Choosing* 200. Women witnesses are overshadowed by a host of other witnesses. As in Luke the male disciples did not flee at his arrest, so Luke relates 'all his acquaintances ... including the women'. Schaberg 'Luke' 290 states that most commentators think that the phrase is meant to include at least some of the apostles. Nolland *Luke* 1160 also reads 'all his acquaintances ... including the women ...'. Nolland comments 'Luke is likely to see witnessing to the crucifixion as a foundation for later being able to function as witnesses to the resurrection, and Luke has both women and men firmly in this role.' Nolland does not specifically refer to disciples or apostles in this regard. But against this position see Dorothy A Lee 'Presence or Absence? A Question of Women Disciples at the Last Supper' *Pacifica* 6 (1993) 2-3: 'those known to him probably refers to an unstructured group of Jesus' relatives and family friends (see Luke 2:44)'.

<sup>605</sup> Green *Luke* 828 n66. The phrase αἰ συνακολουθοῦσαι αὐτῷ in the feminine applies not to the whole group watching from afar, but specifically to the women. See also Seim *Double Message* 148. The grammatical feminine also indicates that only the women have followed Jesus from Galilee, and not the whole group of οἱ (gnwstoi).

<sup>606</sup> It is the women who according to Luke's account are ones who see – ο(ρω=sai is a feminine participle. It is the women who are the witnesses to the crucifixion. Seim *Double Message* 149. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1521. The role of seeing is played in the Greek text by the women alone for the

The women from Galilee are mentioned again in Luke 23:55 in connection with Jesus' burial.<sup>607</sup> They follow Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb where Jesus is laid.<sup>608</sup> The Lucan narrative details that the women from Galilee were able to see the tomb and to note how Jesus' body had been placed. The women from Galilee play the role of family as they prepare spices and ointments for Jesus.<sup>609</sup> Luke is careful to record the respect shown for the Mosaic Law in the narrative detail that the women delay attending to Jesus' corpse until after the Sabbath.<sup>610</sup>

### **On the Third Day**

Luke 24 provides a unique account of 'the third day'. On this day Jesus' departure (e)/codoj – Luke 9:31) is completed, Jesus is raised to life (Luke 24:6), he enters his glory (Luke 24:26), finally departs from the eleven and those with them and is carried up into heaven (Luke 24:51). The centrality of Jerusalem in the Lucan narrative is clear. It is the city in which Jesus' destiny is reached and from which he enters his

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participle is feminine. Women are witnesses of Jesus' death; their function is not that of the idle crowds 'gazing at' the spectacle.

<sup>607</sup> The account in Luke's gospel follows that from Mark. Luke's redaction clarifies that Jesus' crucifixion and burial were occurring on the day of preparation and it was almost the Sabbath (Luke 23:54). Luke omits the names of the women, and adds v56a where the women return to prepare spices and ointments before the Sabbath.

<sup>608</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and a member of the council, takes the primary role in recovering Jesus' body, preparing it for burial, and placing the body in an unused tomb.

<sup>609</sup> Embalming was usually the responsibility of blood relatives of the deceased.

<sup>610</sup> Green *Luke* 830. Burial was typically denied persons sentenced to death as a pronounced form of dishonour. Jewish practice was always to provide a burial where possible. That Jesus is buried is unusual, but not unexpected. More surprising is the honour given to his corpse. Even among the Jews the executed were given an ignominious burial suited to the condemned. Jesus by contrast was wrapped in a linen cloth, shown the honour of a new tomb, women prepare spices and ointments to complete an honourable burial process.

glory. Luke 24 brings to fulfilment the prophecies of scripture within human history. It weaves together the twin themes of fulfilment and prophecy and human misunderstanding moving to faith. The Lucan risen Jesus links his own prophetic oracles with the ancient Israelite prophecies, which together have been fulfilled by his passion and resurrection in Jerusalem. Human response gives witness to this as the risen Jesus is recognised by the community of those who come to faith - on the third day.<sup>611</sup> The women from Galilee assume a central role in receiving and proclaiming the divine revelation of Jesus' resurrection.

### **The Empty Tomb**

Luke's account of the empty tomb (Luke 24:1-12) follows that of Mark (Mark 16:1-8) and finds parallels in Matthew and John.<sup>612</sup> The Lucan narrative builds the element of surprise by detailing the preparations of the women (Luke 23:56-24:1) and reducing the concern in Mark's account over the heavy stone (Mark 16:3).<sup>613</sup> Prepared for one situation, however, the women meet another. The women who had seen the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid (Luke 23:55), who were prepared to complete the services for his burial (Luke 23:56-24:1), are confronted by an empty tomb. They respond in bewilderment.

The women are first to hear the message of resurrection. The announcement of Jesus' resurrection confirms the discipleship of the women. In the empty tomb, in the midst of their perplexity, the women from Galilee are addressed by two men in dazzling

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<sup>611</sup> Squires *Plan of God* 142-143.

<sup>612</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1540-1541 for full list of Luke's redactions.

<sup>613</sup> Green *Luke* 837. Luke has also heightened the element of astonishment by the double use of the verb 'to find' - they *found* the stone rolled away from the tomb, but did not *find* the corpse.

apparel who announce the initiative of God (Luke 24:5).<sup>614</sup> The two men invite the active response and participation of the women in God's initiative.<sup>615</sup> The two men regard the women as disciples. They address the women as those who themselves have received Jesus' teaching in Galilee and they invite the women to remember the words of Jesus.<sup>616</sup> Through this invitation to remember the prediction of Jesus, the narrative strengthens the identification of the women as disciples in their own right.<sup>617</sup> The women were part of the community of followers referred to in Luke 8:1-

<sup>614</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1545. In Luke's account the message of heavenly messengers has been reformatted. The query in Luke 24:5b is unique to Luke. The assurance given to the women in the Matthew and Mark accounts - 'do not fear, do not be afraid' has been replaced in Luke with the characteristic Lucan emphasis on life as one of the effects of the Christ event.

<b>Mark 16</b>	<b>Luke 24</b>
v6 And he said to them, 'Do not be amazed, you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him'.	v5b The men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.'

<sup>615</sup> In Luke's gospel 'two men in dazzling apparel' (Luke 24:4) replace the young man found in Mark's gospel (Mark 16:5). Luke has strengthened the intervention and word from God.

<sup>616</sup> In these verses (Luke 24:6-7) Luke has retained the reference to Galilee; but instead of Galilee being the place where the women are sent to find the risen Lord, as in Mark, the women remain in Jerusalem. The resurrection narrative is set solely in Jerusalem. Galilee is to be *remembered* as the place where the women have received the words of Jesus, the words of prophecy. They are told to bring them to mind - to *remember*.

<b>Mark 16</b>	<b>Luke 24</b>
v7 'But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.'	v6 'Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, v7 that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and on the third day rise.'

<sup>617</sup> Karris 'Women' 14-15. Although the two men in dazzling apparel commanded the women to remember the words of Jesus (Luke 24:7) the Lucan narrative contains no explicit instances where the women were with Jesus in Galilee being told about his death and resurrection on the third day. Karris addresses this issue and offers the work of Rigato who has submitted the wording of Luke 24:7 to detailed analysis. The results of her work claim that the closest literary correspondences to the prediction are in Luke 18:31-34 and 9:22, passages whose

3 and, through the Lucan composition of the meeting in the empty tomb, they are now identified among the disciples referred to in Luke 9:18ff and Luke 17:22ff.<sup>618</sup> In Mark's narrative the women are commissioned to go and tell his disciples and Peter (Mark 16:8), but there is no such commission in Luke's account. Rather, the women are invited into personal understanding of the resurrection message. 'They are given no commission but are treated as recipients of Jesus' words and summoned simply to authentic understanding.'<sup>619</sup>

The women are the first in the community of Jesus' followers to come to faith in the risen Lord. The command by the two men to remember, when used by Luke, is more than a mere bringing to mind or recalling.<sup>620</sup> As in Luke 22:61, when Peter

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audiences are the twelve and the disciples respectively. Rigato concludes that in Luke's view then the women belonged to both groups. If we use literary analysis to express what Luke is doing in Luke 24:7 we would say that Luke is making the women present in situations where the reader initially was led to believe they were absent.

<sup>618</sup> Seim *Double Message* 151. Nolland *Luke* 1190.

<sup>619</sup> Green *Luke* 838. Seim *Double Message* 150-151 also agrees that 'the 'errand girl' commission which is central in the communication made in Mark's version is replaced in Luke by a statement that focuses on the women's own role as disciples'. But see Reid *Choosing* 200 who identifies that the lack of commission means that Luke has identified the men disciples to be the proclaimers and witnesses. Also Tetlow *Women in Ministry* 105 comments negatively that 'Luke is the only one of the four gospels to omit an account of an initial resurrection appearance to women and a personal commissioning of the women by the risen Jesus.' Marshall *Luke* 887. 'The women figure very much as messengers to the disciples'.

<sup>620</sup> Karris 'Women' 14. According to Maria-Luisa Rigato the verb *μνησθεσθηαι* occurs 10 times in Luke-Acts and is always related to God or Jesus. Luke's use of 'to remember' in Luke 22:61 and Acts 11:16 suggests that in Luke 24:6-8 we are not dealing with an ordinary remembering of past events. It is the remembered word of the Lord that helps transform people. In Luke 22:61 Peter's remembered word of the Lord led him on the way to repentance. In Acts 11:16 it led him to accept God's new revelation that Gentiles were clean and could become believers in Jesus Christ.

remembered the words of the Lord, memory includes insight and understanding. According to Seim, 'to remember/recall' is a term used by Luke to denote an understanding that occurs in connection with later activation of prophetic predictions.<sup>621</sup> For Luke, the significance of the resurrection is inseparable from Jesus' prior announcement of the necessity of his suffering and his vindication as Son of Man (See Luke 9:22, 44. Luke 18:31-32).<sup>622</sup> As the women from Galilee are met by the unexpected, the remembered words of Jesus transform them from perplexity to faith (Luke 24:8).<sup>623</sup> The women hear the message of resurrection from the announcement of the messengers of God - 'He is not here, He has been raised' (Luke 24:5) - and they move to understanding and faith through remembering the words they heard from Jesus in Galilee.

Women are the first to proclaim the message of resurrection. They are the first to proclaim the message that Jesus is alive; but those who most truly should have understood deny their message (Luke 24:11).<sup>624</sup> Although the women were not commissioned to tell the other apostles and disciples, the narrative indicates that they went straight to the eleven and the rest and told them 'all these things' (Luke

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<sup>621</sup> Seim *Double Message* 152-153. 'Thus dramatic events which the actors of the narrative themselves have not foreseen, are given their interpretation when the prophetic word of the Lord is remembered' ... 'It is another special expression of the fundamental Lucan concept of promise fulfilment.'

<sup>622</sup> Nolland *Luke* 1193

<sup>623</sup> Seim *Double Message* 153. While 'in John the word *mimnh/skomai* refers to the earlier words and actions of Jesus as well as to scriptural evidence', in 'Luke it is exclusively linked to the instruction of Jesus entrusted to his disciples'. In Luke Jesus' words are 'remembered while the word of Scripture is to be read, interpreted, expounded opened up in the light of the words that Jesus spoke while he was with them'.

<sup>624</sup> Seim *Double Message* 156. The message seemed to them 'empty chatter'.

24:9).<sup>625</sup> The narrative establishes the reliability of their witness.<sup>626</sup> The use of the imperfect ε)/εγον (Luke 24:10) indicates that they repeatedly told the apostles what they had experienced.<sup>627</sup> However, the narrative also states that the women were disbelieved. Their words were regarded by the apostles and male disciples as nothing more than useless chatter (Luke 24:11).<sup>628</sup> Scholars differ on the interpretation of the apostles' failure to believe, but opinion falls broadly into two groups. In the first group are those who claim that the response of the apostles was due to cultural norms and considerations regarding the role of women. Secondly, are those who connect the apostles' response to the contents of the women's story and claim that the empty tomb is not the basis for faith.<sup>629</sup> However, the Lucan narrative

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<sup>625</sup> Luke's narrative does not speak of hesitation or fear on the part of the women. Cf. Mark 16:8

<sup>626</sup> Seim *Double Message* 156. The integrity of the women's statement 'is emphasised by: the statement that they told all/everything'; 'the repetition of what they said included in the Emmaus narrative'; 'the women are sufficiently numerous to fulfil the formal demand about the number of witnesses (cf. Deut 19:15). Luke 24:10 singles out three, mentioning them by name, and the list comes at the end just as a protocol of testimony concludes by mentioning the names of the witnesses'. See also Green *Luke* 839.

<sup>627</sup> Marshall *Luke* 888.

<sup>628</sup> Seim *Double Message* 157. According to Seim 'As a consequence of the narrative's own confirmation of the credibility of the women an ironic tension is created for the reader: the women are absolutely to be believed and the men make a mistake when they do not believe them.' This slightly ironic contrast is also maintained in the description of Peter's visit to the tomb. Compared to the women Peter establishes that the body is no longer in the tomb but has no experience of further interpretation or faith. See also Green *Luke* 840. Peter does not reach the level of insight of the women. To be amazed is a characteristic response to the extraordinary, but it is not tantamount to faith, nor does it portend the eventuality of genuine faith. Karris 'Women' 15.

<sup>629</sup> Nolland *Luke* 1191. The response in Luke is little different to the silence of the women in Mark. 'Luke has a high view of women, but here Luke reflects his awareness of the widespread tendency to discount the word of a woman'. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1543. The testimony of the women 'does not engender faith'. 'Faith depends on their own seeing'. 1547 'Faith

does not easily fall into one position or the other. On the one hand, Luke affirms the faith of the women, presents them as full disciples and indicates that their testimony is right, even when the apostles fail to believe. At the same time, Luke does not let the proclamation of the women stand without the confrontation of denial. Seim sums up the ambivalence in the narrative regarding the women: 'On the one side the passage contains a divine statement that reaffirms the women's status as disciples ... on the other they do not receive any explicit commission to preach ...'<sup>630</sup> Woven

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cannot be deduced, faith is only possible by faith itself'. Cf. the Emmaus story. Against this Green *Luke* 839 identifies two possibilities. Firstly 'failing to grasp Jesus' teaching about his suffering and resurrection they cannot make sense of the news shared with them' by the women. However, they have heard from the women 'all this' so the men must have been given access to significant recent events. Therefore, he concludes, 'the dismissive response of the men is better explained by the fact that those doing the reporting are women and the world was biased against the admissibility of women as witnesses'. Tannehill *Luke* 351 agrees that the failure to believe the women 'reflects cultural resistance to women as witnesses'. Reid *Choosing* 201 disagrees that Luke reflects a cultural bias and claims that Luke's redaction results in a 'diminished role for women at the crucial moments of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection'. In Luke the women are not needed as witnesses – others have also seen. Further, 'should a woman attempt to proclaim Jesus' resurrection, Luke's presentation encourages his readers to disregard her words as nonsense'. Also see Schaberg 'Luke' 291. 'The faith of the men is not based on the word of a woman, on indirect testimony'. 'Faith that Jesus has been raised is based on appearances and teachings of the risen Lord to Simon (Luke 24:34), to the two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24: 31) and to the eleven and their companions (Luke 24:41-43, 46, 52). In Luke the risen Lord does not appear to women. Their witness is not essential to Christian faith'. GW Trompf 'The First Resurrection Appearance and the Ending of Mark's Gospel' *NTS* 18 (1972) 325 argues that the apostles' failure is due to Luke's commitment to the tradition that Peter is the first to see Jesus. 'The appearance to women disappears, their message is ineffective, and Jesus suddenly appears' and speaks the words of peace to the eleven and the rest (Luke 24:33).

<sup>630</sup> Seim *Double Message* 160-163. 'The women's experience is sufficient for them to appear as proclaimers, but they are not believed, even by those who should have the ears of faith'. Further, 'in the Emmaus story the Lord reproaches them for being so dull of understanding and so slow to believe what even the prophets have said'. She also demonstrates that within

through the message of resurrection is the narrative of conflict between theology and culture. This is seen as the conflict in the narrative between the option of full discipleship, being open to all who ‘hear the words of Jesus and do them’, including the women, and the agreed social norm that public witness and proclamation is determined by gender.

The women from Galilee become the nucleus of the new community of faith. The narrative parallels the faith of the women with the lack of faith of the apostles.<sup>631</sup> According to Lee ‘Luke sets Luke 24:8-11 in a chiasmic framework which emphasises the fidelity of one group (female) against the other (male)’.<sup>632</sup> Lee concludes by saying that:

‘just as, in a positive way, the twelve and the women are grouped together at 8:1-3 as followers of Jesus, so now the eleven and the women are juxtaposed, in a negative way, in the crucifixion and the empty tomb stories. The harmony of their earlier relationship is disturbed by the events of the passion.’<sup>633</sup>

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the continuation of the narrative there is an acceptance that ‘women cannot be recognised as witnesses in a man’s world’. ‘This is not justified in theological terms and the women are never explicitly told to keep silent or to be subordinate. What is demonstrated is a structure imposing silence.’ When the message is not believed it is not due to the women, but to the prejudices of the men.

<sup>631</sup> Against this see Schaberg ‘Luke’ 291. ‘The point is not to contrast the believing faithful women with disbelieving faithless men. Nothing is said about women believing, although they do remember.’

<sup>632</sup> Lee ‘Presence’ 3.

<sup>633</sup> Lee ‘Presence’ 3.

<b>a</b>	‘and they <i>remembered</i> his words’ (v8)	faithful remembering
<b>b</b>	‘they returned from the tomb and <i>proclaimed</i> all these things to the eleven and all the rest’ (toi=j loitoi=j - masculine, v9)	mission
<b>c</b>	‘they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the rest with them’ (ai( loipai\ s u\ n au) tai=j – feminine, v10)	presence of women

The first scene of Luke 24 concludes with the women from Galilee, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, and the other women with them (Luke 24:10), as the nucleus of the new community of faith.<sup>634</sup>

<b>b</b> <sup>1</sup>	'they began to tell these things to the apostles' (v10)	mission
<b>a</b> <sup>1</sup>	'and these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they <i>did not believe them</i> ' (au)taij – feminine, v11)	lack of faith

<sup>634</sup> Those who through their remembrance of Jesus' words have moved from perplexity at the sight of the empty tomb to faith that Jesus has been raised become the first of the new community of faith. See Lee 'Presence' 3. Karris 'Women' 16. For alternative perspective see Marshall *Luke* 885.

### **The Appearances of the Risen Lord: Luke 24:13-35, 36-43**

Luke's narrative records two further appearances of the risen Lord. Christ appears firstly to the two who had left the wider group of disciples and were traveling to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and secondly to the community gathered in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-43). Fitzmyer draws attention to the parallelism between these two appearances.<sup>635</sup>

The tension and ambivalence of the narrative towards the women's testimony is maintained within the first appearance narrative (Luke 24:13-35). Karris has argued that Luke's narrative equates the women's confession with the community's christological creed and with Jesus' self-revelation of his resurrection.<sup>636</sup> Green notes that in the telling of the story at this point (Luke 24:24) the narrative even shows greater openness on the part of the community to the women's story than had been evident in Luke 24:11.<sup>637</sup> However, within the narrative of the first appearance of the risen Lord, the earlier ambiguity reappears. The disciples conclude (Luke 24:24) that those who went to the tomb 'found it just as the women had said, but him they did

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<sup>635</sup> Fitzmyer *Luke* 1573. On each occasion the appearance of Jesus is not comprehended. Jesus gives an instruction based on Scripture - which leads to proper revelation. Jesus eats a meal and finally makes his departure.

<sup>636</sup> Karris 'Women' 16. In the conversation between Jesus and the two disciples along the road, the narrative has the disciples recite the creedal statements about Jesus (Luke 24:19). In Luke 24:20-21 the disciples repeat the substance of Jesus' prophecy of his passion and resurrection 'on the third day'. (See Luke 9:22; 13:32-33; Luke 18:31-33.) Then, in Luke 24:22-23, on a level with the previous two christological statements, the disciples recount what the women from their group had seen and what their message was - that Jesus is alive.

<sup>637</sup> Green *Luke* 847. In Luke 24:11 only Peter is recorded as having gone to the tomb whereas in Luke 24:24 the narrative records that ' "some" of those who were with us went to the tomb'.

not see'.<sup>638</sup> According to the narrative the male disciples were not able to affirm the faith of the women.

The narrative of Jesus' final appearance brings to a climax the story of God's divine disclosure in Jesus and the narrative of human response (Luke 24:36-49).<sup>639</sup> In the narrative of the second appearance of the risen Lord (Luke 24:36-49) women are present along with the apostles and disciples.<sup>640</sup> The new community, split by the crucifixion and divided by the women's testimony,<sup>641</sup> appears reunited as they waited together in Jerusalem.<sup>642</sup> In Luke 24:33 Luke defines the group as 'the apostles and those with them'. While there is some debate as to whether this includes

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<sup>638</sup> Green *Luke* 848. Luke has developed the metaphor that 'seeing' is a prerequisite for the affirmation that Jesus is alive.

<sup>639</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 359. Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49) has the basic elements of a 'promise and commission epiphany' (a type of scene that describes the appearance of a divine messenger who transmits a promise and/or commission). See also Green *Luke* 854.

<sup>640</sup> Lee 'Presence' 3. Both groups (male and female) play a symbolic role for Luke. Together they stand for the new community, the new Israel.

<sup>641</sup> In the Lucan narrative the apostles are present in the story at the points of betrayal, misunderstanding and lack of faith. (See Luke 22:3, 31-34; 6:1-62.) Luke's narrative implies that the twelve share Peter's cowardice and shame. They are present neither at the cross nor at the burial tomb of Jesus. The women from Galilee are portrayed in a more positive light. They are witnesses to the crucifixion and take on the role of family at the burial. The women from Galilee are absent from the narrative during the betrayal, trial and condemnation of Jesus to death. They enter the story again only at Jesus' death.

<sup>642</sup> Against this position see Reid *Choosing* 201. There is no Lucan appearance of the resurrected Christ to the Galilean women. Although many believe that Cleopas' companion on the way to Emmaus was a female, Luke never reveals this person's identity (Luke 24:13-35). Those to whom Jesus appeared in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49) are not specified. Presumably it is the eleven and those with them (Luke 24:33). If Luke envisions women as part of this group he does not say so. Schaberg 'Luke' 291.

women,<sup>643</sup> the narrative list provided in Acts 1:12-26 provides a helpful insight. Quesnell claims that the women are there at the first appearance of the Lord and are there also to receive his final words and blessing in Luke 24:36-53.<sup>644</sup> This position is further supported when Luke 24:22 is considered and those on the Emmaus road refer to the women as ‘some women of our company’. Karris argues that women are present at both Luke 24:9 and Luke 24:33.<sup>645</sup> Green claims that ‘the eleven and those with them – their companions’ refers to the circle of twelve without Judas – presumably women and men, those gathered in the opening chapter of Acts 1:12-26.<sup>646</sup> Women, along with men, comprise the community referred to as ‘the apostles and those with them’ who receive the final appearance of the risen Lord.

Through the narrative of the second resurrection appearance of the risen Lord, the new community of faith, including both women and men, is given the key to interpret the initiatives of God. They are commissioned for service with the promise from God. The scene opens in Luke 24:36 with the risen Jesus’ greeting of peace.<sup>647</sup> Through the narrative Jesus is presented as alive, beyond the grave, as an embodied person.<sup>648</sup> The risen Jesus provides the key to interpretation as he makes the link

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<sup>643</sup> See footnote above.

<sup>644</sup> Quesnell ‘The Women at Luke’s Supper’ 68.

<sup>645</sup> Karris ‘Women’ 17. Karris quotes CF Evans on this issue who states ‘the rest is a loose term for an unspecified number of men and women, presumably Galilean disciples’. See also Karris ‘Women’ 15 footnote 53.

<sup>646</sup> Green *Luke* 850.

<sup>647</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 359. The peace greeting takes on a special nuance in Luke in light of previous usage of peace as a term for messianic salvation. (Luke 1:79; 2:14; 10:5-6; 19:42; cf. Acts 10:36). Green *Luke* 854. Here following his death Jesus communicates or transmits continued salvation to those gathered.

<sup>648</sup> Cf. Luke 24:39-42. Jesus shows his hands and feet, flesh and bones. He demonstrates his capacity to eat as he takes a piece of broiled fish. Fitzmyer *Luke* 1574 ‘we are not told that they

between his words, spoken prophetically during his ministry, the words of scripture, and his own experience of crucifixion and resurrection.

‘Through Luke 24:44-49 Jesus recalls his own words while he was with them, and inscribes these words into the scriptural story. He then inscribes the story of the early church into both his own story and that of the Scriptures.’<sup>649</sup>

Following Jesus’ teaching (Luke 24:44-47) the story turns in Luke 24:48 to focus on the ‘eleven and those with them’ as they are commissioned for service. Jesus says to them ‘You are witnesses of these things’. At this point the ‘eleven and those with them’ are written into the story of God’s initiative. They are given a task and a promise.<sup>650</sup> The ‘eleven and those with them’ have been given the key to interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus’ death and resurrection are key events in God’s unfolding plan to bring salvation to the world.<sup>651</sup> Further, the ‘apostles and those

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were at table but this is the gist of the story, for later in Acts we learn that the risen Christ did eat with his apostles’ (Acts 1:4; 10:41). Karris ‘Women’ 17. ‘In Luke 24:41-43 might there be just a hint of reconciliation between Jesus and the men and women around him?’ Tannehill *Luke* 360 in this passage (Luke 24:41-43) the phrase ‘ate in their presence’ uses language that elsewhere implies a shared meal. But against this see Green *Luke* 855. While some interpreters have located in Luke 24:42-43 as a further instance of table fellowship, he provides no evidence here that Jesus ate with anyone. His concern is rather that Jesus ate in front of his followers. Such concerns as fellowship and inclusivity, often associated with table fellowship in Luke-Acts, therefore, ought not to be read into this text.

<sup>649</sup> Green *Luke* 856-857. If the scriptures and Jesus’ own words are fulfilled by the crucifixion, then his disciples should expect the fulfilment of his prophecy of resurrection ‘on the third day’.

<sup>650</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 360.

<sup>651</sup> Tannehill *Luke* 362. They have been with Jesus in ministry and also they have had their minds opened by him to understand the scriptures. Women are in a unique position as witnesses as they alone have been present with Jesus in his Galilean ministry, at the cross, burial, empty tomb and also his resurrection appearance.

with them' are commissioned with power from on high.<sup>652</sup> Those who understand the key to interpret the initiatives of God become themselves part of the plan of God - they are empowered by the Holy Spirit, they become witnesses.<sup>653</sup>

### **The New Community reclaims the Temple: Luke 24:50-53**

While Luke's gospel concludes in the Temple where it commenced the stage has been changed. The Temple was symbolically the place of God's presence. Through the purity system derived from the Temple, it ordered and structured Jewish society. However, in Luke 23:45 the curtain in the Temple was torn in two by the providential action of God. The holiness of the Temple was destroyed. The Temple is no longer able to represent the old temple system of boundaries and purity. The cultic centre has been broken open.

In Luke 24:53 the new community of faith, including both women and men, come to the Temple to offer blessing to God. In this action, the community of faith now claims the Temple, the place of God's symbolic presence, as they are to wait for God's power. In place of priesthood, purity and the redistributive economic patterns of Temple, the relationship of household and reciprocity, that have been adopted to reflect the social and economic relationships of the community of the followers of Jesus, have been located within the symbolic position of the Temple. The community

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<sup>652</sup> Green *Luke* 859. As Jesus commissions them as witnesses he announces to them that they will receive 'what my Father has promised'.

<sup>653</sup> Wegner *Chattel* 120-121 for discussion of women as witnesses. Karris 'Women' 19 addresses the issue of whether the women could testify in public. Karris writes 'whereas the women of Luke 24 might not have been able to testify in the public forum, they surely could do so in other nonpublic, extra domestic contexts'.

of faith is now in a central position to interpret the initiatives of God and to make the response of faith.

## **Summary**

God's disclosure, through the death of Jesus, speaks of the irony of life and death. The death of Jesus reveals the truth about who Jesus is and the consequences for those who fail to acknowledge that he is the prophet from God.

The women from Galilee are given a key and significant role in the Lucan narrative. They followed Jesus to the cross and to the grave. They see and understand the providential work of God and they hear the words of the centurion. In the grave they meet the two men from God, who announce that the Lord has risen. The women become the nucleus of the new remembering, believing community. The women are first to hear the message of resurrection, first to come to faith through the remembered words of Jesus in Galilee and first to proclaim the message of resurrection, although the apostles do not believe. The women are present with the apostles at the appearance of the risen Lord. Together with the apostles they are commissioned as witnesses, and they wait to be 'clothed with power from on high'. They, with the male disciples, are located in the Temple blessing God.

## CONCLUSION

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The Lucan narrative embraces the first century Mediterranean setting: the culture of honour and shame, the institutions of Temple and household and the social patterns of redistribution and reciprocity, to tell the story of God's disclosure and human response. The stories of women present a narrative in which Luke transfers the key symbol of God's presence from Temple to household, creating a new symbolic universe anchored in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is depicted as the one who fulfils scripture and brings together, as the new community of faith, those who hear Jesus' words and obey them. Through the narrative Luke provides a theological interpretation of his historical and social context. Written after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, it offers solace and legitimation to the Lucan community of the late first century.

Women are written into the Lucan narrative. They are given roles that at times embody the expected social and theological position of the first century Mediterranean world, but at other times confront it. An understanding of the position and roles given to women in the narrative contributes to our understanding of Luke's theology of God's disclosure and human response.

The narrative places women as the prime human collaborators with God. Luke's narrative is unique in that the promise of God's salvation is engaged through the faith of a woman. Mary is the recipient of the angelic announcement of Jesus' birth. The women from Galilee receive the angelic announcement of Jesus' resurrection. In

both cases the narrative positions the women, alone, to hear the angelic words. In both cases the women's response of faith is made without reference to any male person. Mary believes that the words spoken to her would find fulfilment and gives birth to Jesus. The women from Galilee remember the words spoken to them during Jesus' ministry, move from perplexity to faith and proclaim the risen Lord. In both cases, however, the faith of the women is paralleled by lack of faith of the men. The angel appears to Zechariah, who is in the Temple praying, but Zechariah fails to recognise God's messenger. As the women from Galilee proclaim the message of resurrection, the apostles consider it an idle tale.

The narrative of God's visitation demonstrates that the initiative of God's disclosure is no longer presented through the Temple and temple system. In a town of no regard, to a person of no status, a woman, the promises of God's salvation are entrusted. In the private home of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Elizabeth correctly interprets the promise made to Zechariah and recognises God's grace. Empowered by the Holy Spirit Elizabeth, in the setting of the household, proclaims the mystery of God, correctly interpreting God's favour to Mary and Mary's response of faith. Elizabeth proclaims the words of blessing.

Widows raise the element of protest. Widows, who have no voice in Jewish society, are given a prophetic voice throughout the Lucan narrative. Anna's life of fasting declares her protest against the status quo of Temple and temple system. Her life of prayer anticipates God's redemption. She correctly interprets the moment of God's visitation and announces that the fulfilment of God's promise of salvation is to be found, not through the Temple and temple system, but with the child named Jesus. On behalf of the widow of Nain, Jesus confronts the reality of death and announces

the possibility of life. In Jesus' action of compassion towards the widow the crowd affirm God's presence and purpose in the person of Jesus. In the parable of the widow and the judge, the widow who continued to come before the judge to make her protest against injustice, exemplifies the response of faith through her action. While the system of justice, represented by the judge, renders injustice, the widow, with no place or representation in the public affairs of justice, publicly and continually demands that justice be done. Her relentless demand for justice is both her prayer and her protest. Finally, the widow in the Temple is the voice warning of false piety and a bankrupt temple system. Scribes and Pharisees, the 'professional prayers', live in dependence on their own accumulated wealth. The widow, through her abandonment to God's provision, demonstrates a life of radical dependence on God.

The parables of God reveal that God, by nature, is to be found with the outsider and the lost. Women who are sick or sinners are healed by Jesus and are restored to community. Faith and forgiveness become the new purity boundary, contradicting the purity boundary of Jewish cleanliness and exclusivity. A woman in the crowd, who had been haemorrhaging for 12 years, touches Jesus and is healed. Jesus affirms her as a daughter, commends her faith and restores her to community. The daughter of Jairus, a leader of the synagogue who expresses faith in Jesus, is healed - raised from death. A 'daughter of Abraham', a woman bent double, is healed in the synagogue, on the Sabbath. A 'sinner', a woman of the city, is forgiven: her faith has saved her. In each instance the narrative highlights the presence of God with those who are outsiders, the purpose of God to bring the good news of Jubilee and the human response of faith, either personally, or as an expression of God's covenant

with Abraham. The stories of women who were healed or forgiven and restored to community are paralleled by the stories of men.

Women demonstrate the response of discipleship and become full members of the new community. While the individual response of discipleship is expressed in gender-specific terms: men leave all to follow Jesus and women minister on behalf of Jesus, the Lucan narrative in no way depicts a community of inequality, superiority or inferiority. As both women and men make the response of discipleship their lives are re-aligned with the purpose and plan of God in Jesus. Women and men together become the new community, the family of God, the household of faith. The new community is not merely male or female, it is not male space into which females are placed, but comprises both women and men. Women and men participate fully in the fellowship meal. The community of women and men is formed in response to the energising and prophetic words of Jesus. Relationship patterns of mutuality and reciprocity, characteristic of the household of faith, stand in contrast to the purity, exclusivity, hierarchy and centralism of the temple system.

Through the narrative the women from Galilee provide a unique human witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus. They provide the only continuity of witness to the ministry, death, burial, resurrection announcement and appearances of Jesus. They are the only disciples who both accompanied Jesus in his Galilean ministry and were present at his crucifixion. They are the only disciples to have witnessed his body in the tomb, but then to have been confronted by the empty tomb. Only the women are met by the two men in dazzling apparel and hear the words of resurrection. They are the first to 'remember' the words of Jesus come to faith. They are the first to announce Jesus' resurrection, although the men disbelieve them.

Women form the nucleus of the new community of faith. They, with the wider community of believers, witness the resurrection appearance of Jesus and receive his words of commission and promise of the Holy Spirit. Women and men, the new community of faith, are given the key to interpret the initiatives of God.

The stories of women present a narrative through which Luke confronts the symbolic world of Temple and temple system and depicts the symbolic world of household as the place of God's presence. God's presence in human history is now to be understood through the patterns of family and household, with Jesus at the centre. The narrative of God's disclosure is set within the framework of Temple. The gospel opens in the Temple with Zechariah, the priest, burning incense while the people outside praying. The gospel closes in the Temple with the new community of faith waiting for the empowering of the Holy Spirit, continually blessing God. However, through the narrative, Luke demonstrates that God's presence is not found through the Temple and temple system, but through the person of Jesus Christ and his words. Relationship with God no longer depends on birth, biological family or ethnic background, gender or social status but on hearing the words of Jesus and obeying them. Jesus' mother and brothers find relationship with Jesus, not because of their biological ties, but on the basis of hearing the word and doing it. Luke creates a world that is ordered in response to Jesus' presence and word, rather than by the system of temple purity. The boundaries of purity and cleanliness are established in Jesus. Jesus brings healing, forgiveness and community to those for whom the temple purity system had brought exclusion. The woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years touches Jesus and, through faith, is healed and restored to community. The woman of the city, a sinner, washes Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair, kisses Jesus' feet and anoints them with ointment.

In this she becomes an example for Simon, the Pharisee. Her sins are forgiven and she is given the blessing, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.' In a society that had been ordered and governed by a firm belief that God's presence was symbolised by the temple system of holiness, the narrative depicts a God who acts well outside the temple boundaries. God's initiative and favour is shown to a woman, Mary. The promises of history, anticipated by the people of God from long ago, rest on the faith of a woman, Mary.

The human response of faith and discipleship involves a deliberate choice of world-view/symbolic universe. It involves stepping outside the world ordered by the Temple and temple system, and the re-orientation of one's life in line with the plan of God as seen in Jesus Christ. As a disciple of Jesus, Martha needed to leave behind the custom of busyness and service to give her full attention to listening to the word of Jesus. Mary called Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna, are depicted as members of the ministering community surrounding Jesus, an itinerant group of Jesus' followers. In this group they assume the role of disciples. They pool their resources and participate fully in the ministry of Jesus. These are women who have been healed by Jesus, whose identity is formed by their relationship with Jesus. They are given a new family in the group of Jesus' disciples, and within this context of family contribute their resources as an expression of their discipleship. The household system of mutuality and reciprocity becomes the paradigm of social life in the kingdom. This is in clear distinction to the temple system of centralisation, hierarchy, taxes and redistribution. The new community of faith, the household of God, participates in the future of God. Jesus commissions the new community, women and men, as witnesses. They become collaborators with God in his divine purpose, as they are clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is this community,

commissioned by Jesus as his witnesses who, at the close of the gospel narrative, wait in the Temple for the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

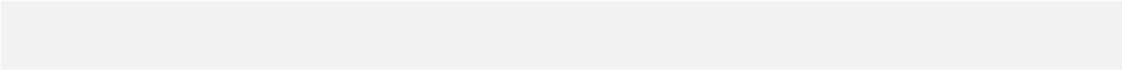
### **Gospel Hermeneutics for the Lucan Community**

A final word must be said in response to issues raised in Part One of this thesis. For first century Jews and Christians, seeking to understand their world following the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, Luke's gospel narrative offers both legitimation for those who had converted to Christianity and a means through which they could reinterpret their relationship with God and establish their identity.

The narrative affirms the presence of God in human history. The narrative reassures the reader that, not only has God not been destroyed along with the Temple, but also, that all that has taken place is within to the plan of God. Luke puts into perspective the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Jesus, the prophet from God, is the one in whom scripture is fulfilled. Jesus is the one with the authority to forgive sin. In Jesus, God becomes present in human history. It is according to the plan of God that the Temple becomes irrelevant in terms of God's presence and human response. Luke creates a new symbolic universe of household, anchored in the person of Jesus Christ, as the fulfilment of Jewish history, temple and scripture.

Luke transforms the essence of holiness from that of purity and exclusivity, maintained by a temple cult, to that of forgiveness and inclusivity offered by Jesus. Faith is at the heart of human response to God. Belonging to the Christian community is no longer matter of status, gender, birth or ethnicity, but of hearing and doing the words of Jesus. God is present, in Jesus, at the point of faith, with the

poor, the weak and with those who have no means of support, to create community, the household of God. This is the path of faithful Israel who now live within a social reality determined by the patterns of the institution of household. At the heart of the household of God, God is present symbolically in Jesus at the eschatological meal.



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