Slaves and Benefactors:  
A Social-Scientific Investigation  

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

University of Divinity

3 March 2014
This thesis examines the social and cultural context of Luke 22:21-27, in order to discover how Luke seeks to answer the question: what is spiritual authority, as contrasted with secular authority, and what legitimates spiritual governance? The passage deals with benefaction and serving, and so its ecclesiological dimensions are best understood through a historically informed social-scientific method. Thus the investigation inquires into the social history of both these practices and employs anthropological and sociological tools. The passage Luke 22:21-27 follows directly on the disciples’ argument about greatness and this argument comes immediately after the revelation that one of the disciples will betray their master. When the position of Judas is examined, it is found that his actions dishonoured his master, but also shamed himself and all the other disciples, because of their mutual responsibility in respect of group behaviour. Thus any discussion of the greatness of disciples is beside the point. The thesis examines the importance of benefaction in promoting the greatness of authorities and rulers in the ancient world, demonstrating that benefaction legitimated a corrupt imperial system founded upon conquest, exploitation, oppression, and tax. The remedy advised by Jesus placed the authorities of the Jesus group in the position of children and slaves. Examination of childhood in classical antiquity reveals an emphasis on obedience, submission, and attentiveness to parents. A close study of slavery in the slave society of the Roman Empire discovers violence, control, lack of personal agency and the desiderata of loyalty, abasement and explicit obedience. The thesis concludes that Luke envisaged the Kingdom of God would be governed by persons in subjugation, at the bottom of the ladder of authority. These results reveal that spiritual authority is legitimated by servitude, beyond merely service, in Luke’s worldview.
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GREEK TEXT AND TRANSLATION: LUKE 22:21-27

21 Πλὴν ἵδοι ἡ χεῖρ τοῦ παραδίδοντος μετ᾿ ἐμοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης. 22 ὁτι ὁ ὁμός μεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατὰ τὸ ὄρισμένον πορεύεται, πλὴν οὐάι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι᾿ οὐ παραδίδοται. 23 καὶ αὐτοὶ ἤρξαντο συζητεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς τὸ τίς ἄρα εἴη ἐξ αὐτῶν ὁ τοῦτο μέλλων πράσσειν. 24 ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ φιλονεικία ἐν αὐτοῖς, τὸ τίς αὐτῶν δοκεῖ εἶναι μεῖζων. 25 ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν κυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἐξουσιάζοντες αὐτῶν εὐρεγεταί καλοῦνται. 26 ὑμεῖς δὲ σὺχ σύτως, ἀλλὰ ὁ μεῖζων ἐν ὑμῖν γινέσθω ως ὁ νεώτερος καὶ ὁ ἡγούμενος ὡς ὁ διακονός. 27 τὶς γὰρ μεῖζον, ὁ ἀνακείμενος ἢ ὁ διακονός; σύχι ὁ ἀνακείμενος; ἐγὼ δὲ ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν εἰμὶ ως ὁ διακονός.

MY TRANSLATION: 21 But behold! the hand of the one handing me over is with me on the table. 22 And whereas the son of man is departing, according to what has been destined, nonetheless woe to that man through whom he is being handed over. 23 And they began to ask among themselves which one from among them was about to commit this deed. 24 And there began to be a rivalry among them as to which of them seemed to be the greatest. 25 But he said to them, “The rulers of the nations dominate them, and the ones exercising authority on them are called benefactors. 26 But you are by no means this way, but the greatest among you must be as the youngest, and the one presiding as the one serving. 27 For who is greater, the one reclining or the one serving, is it not the one reclining? But I am among you as one serving.”

INTRODUCTION

This thesis sets out to examine the social and cultural context of Luke 22:21-27. The questions of ‘greatness’ and honour are debated in these verses, and the ancient practice of benefaction, particularly by rulers, is shown to legitimate domination. In the same text Luke portrays servitude, not to say slavery, as the way to spiritual authority. The setting is the Last Supper, at Passover in Jerusalem; the speaker is Jesus, the audience his disciples, including Judas, who attends the meal in a state of spirit possession. Biblical scholars have paid insufficient attention to the role of Judas in the honour economy of the Jesus group. The act of Judas, who is possessed by Satan, shames the entire group and leads to the teaching that servitude is more honourable than benefaction. It is the trigger for the teaching that any discussion of ‘greatness’ among the Jesus group is unwarranted in view of the disciples’ lack of control over one of their fellows.

It must be said at the outset that throughout this thesis, the text of Luke-Acts is presumed, as is commonly understood, to be a document that “originally constituted a two-volume work by a single author.”1 Because the volumes were written on different papyrus rolls (a process dictated by the available length of scrolls), it was possible for the early church to divide them in creating the Tetraevangelium or fourfold Gospel in the second century: Luke, says Aune, was “subordinated to a larger literary structure.”2 Green points out a number of factors tending to emphasise the narrative unity of Luke-Acts including “parallels between Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and his disciples in the Acts of the Apostles.”3

Green indicates that while Luke provides the anticipation and bringing to light of God’s purpose in delivering salvation to all humankind, as the ministry and death of

Jesus makes it all possible, it is through Acts that this purpose is realised; here we see the results of God’s plan coming about through Paul and the followers of Jesus.4 Aune, similarly, says that while Luke deals with what Jesus taught and did (Acts 1:1), Acts “deals with the deeds and teachings of the apostles” who become heroes (in the literary form used to describe Acts from 150 CE): “Praxeis literature … does not treat character and development, but rather depicts the outstanding deeds of a prominent person, such as a king, general or hero.”5 Outstanding deeds are celebrated in benefaction, which is a subject of this thesis.

So any reference to Paul in my thesis always indicates the Paul of Acts. Acts also provides the continuous narrative of Judas, whose story is not complete until we read of his death at Acts 1:18. It is the revelation of the actions of Judas that promotes the critique of ‘greatness’ and benefaction at Luke 22:25. The apostles carry out into the world of Acts the changed situation revealed in the gospel of Luke, but it is the same social world.

The first chapter will give context concerning Mediterranean cultures in antiquity. A basic description of collectivist cultures in the ancient world includes the nature of group responsibility, in which every member of a group is responsible for the behaviour of all the others; the importance of honour to social status, honour being “public reputation” both claimed and acknowledged; and the dual social structure of household (οἶκια) and city (πόλις).6 Discussion of benefaction (always represented as a gift to the πόλις) will examine the political situation in first-century Jerusalem, including the ambiguous nature of Herodian authority in Israel, the Roman orientation of the high priestly families, and the benefactions tending to Hellenisation and deliberate westernisation by all in the face of a contested multicultural environment. Roman

overlordship will be shown to have taxation as its major preoccupation, and the role of
the Temple in money exchanges of all kinds will be exposed. We then follow the money
trail through the activities of the Roman Army in encouraging tax collection. The final
section will introduce the Kingdom of God, by examining the wealth and corruption of
the Temple, Luke’s critique of greed, and the expectation that the Kingdom of God will
bring about a spiritual transformation that will reverse the existing order. This overview
is needed to put a frame around the basic question behind the argument about
‘greatness’: what legitimates a government, and what is spiritual as contrasted with
secular authority?

contrasts the rulers of the Gentiles with the persons in authority among Jesus’ own
followers. Luke has already demonstrated, in his description of the Temptation, the
authority of Satan over “all the kingdoms of the world” (Luke 4:5-6): in Johnson’s words,
the text describes “the struggle between God and the powers of evil as one between two
kingdoms.”7 As I will show, the ultimate ruler in the Roman Empire was the Roman
Emperor, whose divine authority was shared with the Roman gods, although it might be
attained by military struggle, bribery, murders and court conspiracies.8 Hence when I use
the terms ‘secular power’ or ‘worldly power’ I mean Roman Imperial state power as
exercised by Roman military, administrative and financial means throughout the Roman
Empire: that is, over the whole Roman world. This will include Roman appointments
(such as the High Priests at Jerusalem), clients (such as Herod), and any other associates.

In contrast to this overlordship Luke places the Kingdom of God, a ‘place’ ruled
according to God’s will and plan under different understandings to those espoused by
Roman domination. Johnson states that “the Kingdom of God is not a territory or a

political realm. It is the rule of God over human hearts.” Moxnes observes an emphasis on time, particularly eschatological time, in interpretations of the Kingdom of God, noting that where the Kingdom is envisaged as space Luke’s listeners would experience, instead of the traditional worlds of household and politics, a place in which household and kingdom become a “third space” because the Kingdom “takes on the qualities of an ideal household” ruled by a Father who gives the family life and inheritance, protection and provision for all their needs. Support as “pure gift” within the household is extended to Jesus’ followers, who have separated from their origins and found new identities apart from their political and family backgrounds. Jesus’ “claim that the kingdom was present must be understood as a claim that the power of God was present in Galilee.”

Power, in general, includes both “the inherent capacity to perform” and the authority or legitimacy to do so. When I use the term ‘spiritual power’ I do not mean power dependent on one of the many spirits, demons or demi-gods prevalent in the ancient world and fervently believed in: these are subjected to the power exercised by Jesus and the disciples in Luke-Acts. Nor do I mean some vague ‘spirituality’ as collected in individualist cultures today, nor even an Anabaptist (16th century) emphasis on charisma in ecclesiastical behaviour. ‘Spiritual power’ is ‘Holy Spirit power’ that “enacts the divine dynamis (power) worked among philosophers and heroes” in the ancient Mediterranean world “enabling them to perform extraordinary deeds.” In Luke-Acts the performance of these extraordinary deeds of preaching, healing, and exorcism derives from the Holy Spirit to the men and women of God who will lead the church (as it will

11 Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 156, 124.
12 Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 140.
become). The Holy Spirit and the divine *dynamis* are closely connected (Acts 10:38).\textsuperscript{15} “It is by means of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit that Luke establishes the continuity of God’s one salvific purpose,” says Green: the Holy Spirit is the *empowering* agent.\textsuperscript{16} Green notes that “throughout the whole of his ministry, Jesus operates in the sphere of the Spirit and his power is derived from the Spirit.”\textsuperscript{17} The Holy Spirit will empower the speech of the disciples when they are brought before rulers and authorities (Luke 12:11-12): another contrast between worldly and spiritual power.

According to Brown, “the distinguishing feature of Lukan ecclesiology is the overshadowing presence of the Spirit”: the very word ‘Spirit’ is used more often in Luke-Acts than anywhere else in the New Testament, some seventy references in Acts alone.\textsuperscript{18} The Spirit empowers, directs, and provides: among other things, it provides the bishops ( overseers) at Acts 2:28.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore I think that Luke opposes the worldly power of Roman-dominated life with Holy Spirit power.

In view of the vital importance of honour in all first-century settings, the second chapter will investigate the dishonouring behaviour of Judas, under the hand of Satan. The first section deals with Luke’s view of Satan, including his role in the Temptation. The second discusses the spirit-laden environment of classical antiquity, where dreams, visions, and other manifestations of alternate reality move events, from local to international levels, and where everything that happens has a personal causation, whether mortals, gods, or demons are involved. Scholars understand that Satan’s activity advances the Lukan Plan of God, in spite of Satan’s intentions, although Judas as well as others suffers as a result.\textsuperscript{20} But there is a need for examination of the workings of honour and

\textsuperscript{17} Green, *Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, 45.
\textsuperscript{19} Brown, *Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, 68.
shame within the Jesus group itself, as well as the consequences for the honour standing of Jesus and the disciples in Jerusalem at that fateful Passover. The lack of loyalty, and hence of honour within the group, casts a new light on the meaning of ‘greatness’ and legitimation of authority through slavery, a dishonoured state.

Chapter Three investigates the advice the Lukan Jesus gives to the leaders of the disciples, the ones presiding in the banqueting analogy that Jesus makes during his final discourse at the Last Supper in Jerusalem. We clarify the advice to behave as “the youngest” (ὁ νεώτερος: Luke 22:26 BF⁶) by examining the ladder of authority, typically reinforced with violence, in first-century cultures, in which children are at the bottom: only slaves are lower. But Jesus’ advice further designates “the one serving” as the ideal to be emulated (ὁ διακονών: Luke 22:26-27 BF⁶) so that the lowest place of all is the one that legitimates spiritual power and governance.

Then we observe the ancient economy (mainly static) to see how work is carried out and viewed in the Roman Empire, which placed principal value on landholding and gave relative lack of honour to crafts and trades. In order to understand the meaning of slavery as the envisaged state of Jesus’ disciples (Luke 17:10), we must explain the basic facts about a slave society, including the idea of slaves as “living instruments” towards carrying out the master’s desires without independent agency.²¹ And we will look at the specific task of waiters at an ancient banquet. The desiderata for both children and slaves in the Roman world were reticence, dependence, obedience, and attentiveness to superiors, and we will show that these are the conditions for spiritual authority in the Kingdom of God.

The world in which the New Testament writers composed their works, and in which their first listeners received them, gives the Gospels a particular context, historical, social, and rhetorical, and in any study of this context the Roman Empire must play a

²¹ Arist. Pol. 1254a9; Varro Rust. 1.17.
significant role. An examination of Luke 22:21-27 needs to take into account the practices of imperial domination in the first-century Mediterranean world. The Lukan Jesus tells his disciples at Luke 22:25, “The kings of the nations dominate them, and those exercising authority upon them are called benefactors,” as part of his farewell address to his disciples on the eve of his arrest, trial, and eventually his execution by the Roman authorities.\(^2\) Roman domination did not stop at military conquest or even administrative control, but was significantly financial and cultural as well.\(^3\) And since benefaction, or the donation of public buildings, festivals, banquets and other civic spectacles by private individuals, wealthy families and imperial agents, was tied to the possession of wealth and status, the question arises as to where such riches originated and how they were disbursed.\(^4\) Does Luke consider benefaction to be a bad thing in itself (when clearly the benefits are real, in the form of architecture, infrastructure and events tending to the public welfare), or are the sources of the money underpinning benefaction, the arrangement of the agrarian economy, and the presence of subsistence poverty Luke’s complaint? Could benefaction legitimate rulership by overcoming the injustices, financial and personal, on which the Roman social world was based?

Luke’s Jesus advises against benefaction as a way to attain ‘greatness’ (Luke 22:24). He says instead that the greatest must be like the youngest, and “the one presiding” must be like “the one serving” because speaking for himself, their leader, “I am among you as one serving” (Luke 22:26-27: my translation). This is to say, at a dinner, specifically here the Passover dinner in Jerusalem, as a waiter. It is made clear that the server is inferior to the one being served (Luke 22:27). When we investigate the social meaning of age in the ancient world, we will find that while old age is honourable and

worthy of respect, younger people are often facing serious disadvantages. We must also understand the workings of a slave society to clarify the comparison Jesus makes between the work of his disciples and slave’s work (Luke 17:10; 12:35-38).

The service described is specifically table service, as Luke’s Gospel uses the ancient banquet as a metaphor for worldly life. The feeding of the five thousand is a banquet: the disciples are ordered to ask the men (ανδρες) to recline (κατακλίνω) and then the disciples are set to serve them (Luke 9:14; 16). The act of reclining represents the honourable position of a guest.25 A discussion of the importance of dining and the Passover ritual in particular is needed to contextualise the events at the Last Supper. At this same dinner Luke’s Jesus predicts his arrest through one of the disciples who will hand him over to the authorities (Luke 22:21) and pronounces a prophetic woe upon that person (Luke 22:22). Judas Iscariot is a player in an imperial system where “the military and administrative structure of the empire was not an impersonal bureaucracy, but bound to the emperor out of personal loyalty.”26 How does Luke portray a colonised individual like Judas in a restive province under the protection of Rome? The answer lies in the concept of spirit possession. The Holy Spirit in Luke’s Gospel is a spirit of liberation, and Luke’s Jesus is the agent of liberation (Luke 4:18-19). While Satan, the evil spirit, possesses one of the disciples (Luke 22:3), Luke’s Jesus has already stated at Luke 4:43 that the purpose for which he was sent was to “proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God,” a world of liberation as significant as the release from Egypt into the Promised Land. The implication is that the Kingdom of God is governed by legitimate authority, while the world of Satan is not God’s rule (Luke 4:5-6).

Evil spirits were designated as unclean in first-century Mediterranean cultures, where purity and honour affected not only individuals but whole families, associations,

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26 Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations,” 246.
cities, and lands. When Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus’ closest companions, becomes possessed by the spirit of Satan (Luke 22:3) and arranges to hand over his master to the Jerusalem religious authorities just before Passover, this is extremely shameful for Jesus and all of his followers. “Spirit-aggression” was believed to cause both physical and mental afflictions, and “Luke’s worldview lies heavily under the influence of spirits, demons, and the like.”\(^{27}\) Impurity and dishonour can bring disaster in this environment, whether these are seen as due to the intervention of spirits or the anger of gods. Satan is a spirit who describes himself as one who has received a gift of the world, and therefore one who can legitimately give away the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:5-6).

To understand the dishonourable position of Jesus and his disciples in the eyes of the world, which is due to the defection of Judas to the imperial rulers of the age, we must first examine the collectivist culture of Luke’s time and place, which places such emphasis on honour and purity as a means of separating the good from the bad. It is in this dishonoured context that Satan is expected to sift the disciples like wheat (Luke 22:31). It is also this demonstration of disloyalty that makes any discussion of ‘greatness’ or worthiness among the disciples absurd. Jesus makes it clear that while benefaction legitimates tyranny, only the most extreme devotion and loyalty, the obedience required of a child or the servitude of a slave, denotes a ruler in the Kingdom of God.\(^{28}\) This is the legitimation of spiritual authority among the disciples of Jesus.

We will now introduce some texts giving theoretical insights into ancient benefaction and the anthropological understanding of the gift. We will also introduce some key scholarship and methodology of the social-scientific hermeneutic, and make reference to historical studies of classical antiquity which have influenced the orientation


\(^{28}\) See also Mark 10:42.
of this thesis, as well as more specific writings on slavery in general and specifically in the New Testament era.

Luke applies the cultural model of benefaction, a widely understood expression of patron-client relations in Greco-Roman civilisation, as a linking factor between Hellenistic and Judaic cultures in his description of Jesus as saviour. Public recognition of the relationship between benefactor and beneficiary reflected the “widespread understanding that the chief task of deities and rulers is to ensure the safety and well-being of those who rely on their services.” The title of benefactor or saviour, then, was given to those of “unusual merit” whether military, civic, or even philosophical: this last due to “inward excellence” and “prudent counsel.” The foundational in-depth study of such laudatory material from the classical world, as it applies to the New Testament, is Danker’s *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*.

Danker describes his method as an analysis of terminology, principally of Greek texts, and the term ‘benefactor’ is used to denote “a depth-structural reality” expressed in various forms. His book includes translations of mainly official inscriptions dating from a period covering about six centuries. It treats the profile of the benefactor, the main benefits that lead to recognition of a benefactor, the view of a benefactor as “endangered benefactor” or someone whose life is risked for the public welfare, and lastly the response or expressions of gratitude that follow benefaction. It is Danker’s view that Luke 22:25 refers to “petty tyrants who like to pass themselves off as benefactors” and thus in this verse the object of criticism is not benefaction as such but “the interest in

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domination that is evidenced by many rulers who try to mask their tyranny with a flourish of public works.\textsuperscript{32}

My own interpretation of Luke 22:21-27 is based on a social-scientific approach, which, as Malina indicates, is neither social description nor social history, but relies instead upon anthropology and comparative sociolinguistics.\textsuperscript{33} However, I have also consulted social-historical readings, such as Garnsey and Saller’s \textit{The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture}. Benefactors relied upon their economic resources to make donations to the community, and Garnsey and Saller’s thematic approach introduces the ways in which economy and society were intertwined in actual historical practice. They note, for example, that where “local politicians are required to be benefactors, whether by custom or by law, then political office is effectively restricted to the rich.”\textsuperscript{34} The rich, however, “were in a position to indulge in profiteering as well as benefaction” and this information is useful in interpreting Luke’s attitude to benefaction. Historical setting aids the understanding of Luke’s ideas about legitimate rulership as compared to the political practices of the time.

Garnsey and Saller put a historical frame around the cultural activity of benefaction that Moxnes examines for its social meaning in \textit{The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation}.\textsuperscript{35} The editor described the method used by the authors in this book as “a historical-critical reading of a first-century, Mediterranean, biblical document.”\textsuperscript{36} It is this social-scientific approach that informs the way that I have addressed the text (Luke 22:21-27) in this thesis. The distinction between social

\textsuperscript{32} Material in this paragraph from Danker, \textit{Benefactor: reality}, 27; inscriptions, 29; endangered benefactor, 417; domination 324.


\textsuperscript{34} Material in this paragraph from Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, \textit{The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987): politicians, 33; profiteering, 101.

\textsuperscript{35} Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations,” 241-268.

description and a social-scientific study is that the latter presents a hypothesis
“concerning a relationship of some social phenomena” (such as benefaction) “that guides
a collection of data that are then used to illustrate and explain the relation, meaning and
function of the social phenomena.”37 In the case of our current text the phenomena are
benefaction and slavery, although honour and youth will also be considered. Honour is
closely bound with benefaction, as will be seen, and youth has certain characteristics in
common with slavery.

What makes Garnsey and Saller’s book historical rather than sociological is the
study of “unique and particular events and persons.” It recounts “the sequence of events
of the past as relevant to the historian’s contemporaries,” whereas the social sciences
“look to what is typical” and “focus on general patterns of perception and behaviour” in a
certain cultural milieu.38 The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation was designed
to showcase exactly these models of typical institutions, values, and social psychologies
“derived from anthropologists and sociologists concerned with cross-cultural
comparison” that allows the authors to “set out the meanings conveyed by Luke in terms
of the chosen models.” Moxnes uses these models in his examination of benefaction as
he focuses on issues of patronage, and therefore benefaction, in Luke’s gospel. This
approach can clarify what was typical of benefaction in antiquity, and how benefaction
was used to legitimate patronage and authority.

Moxnes believes that Luke’s gospel presents “a patronage ideology viewed ‘from
below’” and the gospel contains “a pressure on behalf of those with least resources not
to use their benefactions to make the needy into clients.”39 Saller says, “The most basic
premise from which the Romans started was that honor and prestige derived from the

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37 Material in this paragraph from John H. Elliott, “From Social Description to Social-Scientific Criticism:
exegesis, 29; interpretive method, 29; phenomena, 30.
38 Material in this paragraph from Neyrey, preface to Social World: history vs. typical, xii; anthropological
models, xvi.
power to give what others needed or wanted.” 40 However, a client (or, recipient of benefaction) “by publicizing his patron’s beneficia, also advertised his own inferiority.” The patron-client nexus was essential to the workings of ancient benefaction that legitimated rulers in the first-century Mediterranean world.

At ground, however, the theoretical basis of studies of benefaction begins with the anthropological model of the gift. Benefaction is an example of gift-reciprocity as studied by Durkheim’s student Mauss in his classic study of gift exchange, *The Gift*, which Douglas has described as “a grand exercise in positivist research, combining ethnology, history, and sociology.”41 Mauss himself describes his study as seeking to answer one question, “What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?”42 Mauss investigates the etymologies of words concerned with giving, and, in connection with Roman practice, points out that terms “of contract and obligation … seem to link up with that system of spiritual bonds created through the crude fact of *traditio*”; the person who receives the gift (or indeed the purchase) of someone else becomes the one “who is linked to him by the thing itself, namely by his spirit.” There is, then, a connection between spiritual authority and giving, of which benefaction is one manifestation.

Mauss’ method, says Douglas, was “like an injunction to record the entire credit structure of a community.”43 This is important for benefaction where economic power is, as Saller has indicated, the source of public reputation: honour.44 *The Gift* changed the perception that economy can be divorced from society. According to Douglas, it

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43 Douglas, forward to *The Gift*, x.
44 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 126.
changed the anthropologist’s perception of economy, kinship, and religion. The gift model underlines the idea that economy and society were inseparable in antiquity, and both benefaction and slavery were ‘economic’ manifestations of this reality.

Douglas titles her forward “No free gifts” as a way of summarising what Mauss has to say. “Once given, the free gift entails no further claims from the recipient … According to Marcel Mauss that is what is wrong with the free gift. A gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction.” By this realisation, Mauss restores the ancient understanding of gift/patronage espoused by Seneca and others. In connection with the benefactors at Luke 22:25, it is just this attempt to reinforce solidarity that is at issue. Solidarity with whom? Luke’s unrelenting opinion is that the poor, the dishonoured, and the weak are those in solidarity with the Kingdom of God. Douglas and Isherwood note that goods are “mediating materials” for the “social process” of relationships between people and may include “food, drink, and hospitality” as well as clothing and other objects (right up to public buildings) that enable social connections.

Thus a public banquet is as much a benefaction as a public building. Yet ancient Mediterranean benefactors would be praised for non-material gifts as well. Monetary benefits included, for example, reduction of taxes, prosperity, relief in times of famine or disaster, and non-monetary benefits included such concepts as forgiveness, amnesty, liberation, social stability, and peace. These benefits presume control of resources and the power to do the reverse: that is, to condemn rather than to forgive, to punish rather than to free, to wage war rather than peace. This view of benefaction thus places it in opposition to the concept of slavery, a resourceless, powerless state.

45 Douglas, forward to The Gift, xiv.
46 Douglas, forward to The Gift, vii.
47 Saller, Personal Patronage, 119.
49 Danker, Benefactor, 393-409.
Douglas and Isherwood consider goods as “the visible part of culture,” as they “are needed for making visible and stable the categories of culture.”

Danker’s method of epigraphic study illustrates this process: by creating monuments to benefactors, the memory of the benefaction, or cultural benefit, is rendered material, visible. His examples show how benefaction does have real benefits in the secular world. It is worth exploring whether the benefits of benefaction outweighed the disadvantages that came with acquisition of the wealth required of benefactors.

Douglas and Isherwood note that “one way to maintain a social boundary is to demand an enormous fee for admission.” This is an economic description of a social effect. Since Luke is interested in the social effects of the ritual known as money, and indeed “of all New Testament writers St. Luke lays the greatest stress on the proper use of possessions,” Douglas and Isherwood’s approach can shed light on these social effects.

Douglas refers to money as “an extreme and specialised type of ritual” that, like ritual, “makes a link between the present and the future” and “provides a fixed, external, recognisable sign for what would be confused, contradictable operations.” There is a social boundary between benefactors and recipients in spite of the ideology that benefaction reinforces social bonds. What was reinforced, as we shall see, was the hierarchical structure of ancient society, dependence, and acknowledgement of both superiority and inferiority in the population of the Roman Empire.

Goods in the ancient Mediterranean world were not only in short supply, but most of the population lived on a subsistence basis. The rich were viewed with suspicion. As Moxnes says, “It is a characteristic motif of Luke that God’s benefactions

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52 Danker, *Benefactor*, 408.
54 Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 43.
are directed towards the poor and lowly, while he sends the rich and mighty away.”\(^5\) The Pharisees at Luke 16:4 are called “lovers of money” who serve Mammon, not God. Moxnes suggests that Mammon represents not only money, but “a system of unjust structures of exploitation and oppression,” so serving Mammon is a kind of “negative patronage” in which even local community leaders have joined the enemy.\(^6\) We need an examination of the general economic situation of the populace in the Roman Empire in order to comprehend the inequalities that Luke critiques so often, and so come to an understanding about why Jesus is shown to discredit benefactors.

As Danker argues, “Luke’s description of Jesus in Luke 24:19 is in fact the climax of a series of editorial efforts to establish Jesus as Lord, or Great Benefactor, who acts in consort with the Chief Benefactor.”\(^5\) Neyrey investigates divine benefaction in “God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity.” This information can then be applied to Luke’s text. Neyrey’s method expands the model by examining benefactor titles “in light of media of exchange, especially power, knowledge, and material benefaction”; since studies of benefaction have usually concentrated on mortal benefactors who have mortal clients, the field of divine benefactors with mortal clients is open to examination and provision of new data.\(^5\) Through this model we observe that the critique of benefactors at Luke 22:25 appears as a tool in the separation of secular and spiritual worlds, such that the divine benefactor acts with true generosity, while the rulers of the political world are self-serving.

The Kingdom of God is a spiritual realm where the benefactions of God represent the entire environment. Jesus (Joshua) is the name of the benefactor who,

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\(^5\) Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations,” 257.
\(^6\) Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations,” 256.
\(^5\) Danker, Benefactor, 340.
following Moses, leads Israel into the Promised Land (Acts 7:45; Josh 3:7) just as Jesus of Nazareth leads all humankind into the Kingdom of God (Acts 10:34-38). And Jesus’ disciples have been ordered to extend his benefactions to all and to proclaim the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-2). This produces a kind of loop, for the Passover dinner celebrates liberation from slavery in Egypt, while Jesus proclaims a new servitude for the leaders in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:26-30). The themes of slavery and liberation are linked through the Passover tradition and the benefactions of Israel’s God.

The Roman Empire was a large-scale slave society. In the gospels, slave-owning is taken for granted. That Jesus can designate a leader’s authority in terms of one who must be “slave of all” (Matt 20:27; Mark 10:44), and can assume slaveholders among his disciples (Luke 17:7), and knows the conditions under which slaves are held (John 8:35) indicates the prevalence of slavery in the world of the evangelists. Works such as Glancy’s _Slavery in Early Christianity_, Harrill’s _Slaves in the New Testament_, and Bradley’s _Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire_ explore that world of first-century slavery and domination. But the anthropological foundation of slavery studies and the work that clarifies the meaning and practice of slavery in all contexts is Patterson’s in-depth account in _Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study_. Patterson defines slavery as “the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonoured persons,” and he further notes that the universal factor in master-slave relationships was “the strong sense of honor the experience of mastership generated” together with dishonouring of slaves. The Roman Empire was a slave society “in which the social

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61 Orlando Patterson, _Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study_ (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982): definition, 13; honour, 11.
structure was decisively dependent on the institution of slavery.”⁶² Although the slave population in such a slave society might be numbered at no more than a third of the total populace, the dependence could be based on more than economic factors. Patterson declares that “all power strives for authority” and this is particularly interesting for my investigation of the legitimation of spiritual authority through slave status.⁶³

In summary, this thesis examines the context of honour, benefaction and control surrounding Jesus and the disciples in Jerusalem at the time of the Last Supper. It shows how Satan’s possession of Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, whose public disloyalty shames the entire group of disciples, calls into question the honour of all the disciples and the authority of their master, Jesus. And it demonstrates how worldly honours, that legitimate practices of domination, are ineffective in the Kingdom of God, where subservience and obedience legitimate spiritual power.

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⁶² Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 353.
⁶³ Material in this paragraph from Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*: population, 353; authority, 35.
CHAPTER ONE: HONOUR AND BENEFACTION

In the first century CE, the progression of Roman overlordship in Rome’s provinces devolved from the military to the monetary to the gift. Benefaction was the benign step on this ladder of socio-political control, designed to result in willing acquiescence to Roman and Herodian dominance. At Luke 22:25 Jesus expressly criticises benefactors. His critique has both political and spiritual emphasis, for as will be seen, politics and religion are not separated in the ancient world. This chapter introduces the cultural and political backdrop to benefaction in the Eastern Mediterranean during the first century, and explores the idea of the Kingdom of God as a counterpoise to Roman rule, both mediated and overt. We visit the vital importance of honour in Mediterranean cultures, which underlies the motives for benefaction, and consider the financial underpinnings of benefaction, examining the role of taxation in Roman provinces and the monetary practices of the elite, including the Roman Emperor. And we review the military presence that shores up Roman rule, which leads to a description of the expectation of a reign or Kingdom of God as the alternative to existing social structures in the territory of Israel.

What is wrong with benefaction, and why does Luke’s Jesus disparage it so? First we must be aware of some features of Mediterranean cultures that powerfully influenced the thinking, values, and behaviour of first-century persons. The overriding importance of the value of honour, or public reputation, affected everyone, although some people, for example slaves, had no honour and could be insulted with impunity. Secondly, there was a perception of limited good.1 Based on agrarian land practices, the belief was that all

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1 Jerome H. Neyrey and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “‘He Must Increase, I Must Decrease’ John 3:30: A Social and Cultural Interpretation,” in The Social World of the New Testament, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 239. The model of limited good was developed by anthropologist George Foster to describe modern peasant cultures, but belief in limited good is evident in ancient sources. See discussion on pp. 35-36.
goods are, like the land, absolutely limited, and good things are usually allocated already: someone else possesses them, so in order to get more of what one wants (the desire for more would be seen as greedy, and motivated by envy) one must take it from others.² In the third place, and as a result of the first two, the ambition for more land, more wealth, and more honour created a suspicious, confrontational and agonistic social setting where individuals, families and whole countries played out roles of conflict, victory and defeat. Most notably the Roman Empire expanded by conquest, and the result for the peoples of a conquered territory such as Israel was a chronic sense of shame. Benefaction, then, played its role in legitimating the difficult political and social realities in Jerusalem at the time of the Last Supper.³

The Primacy of Honour

Honour is the central cultural value in the Greco-Roman world of the first century CE. This section will examine the social dimensions of collectivist cultures including obligations of group members towards kinfolk and other insiders, the role of the dominus or head of the extended family, and the complementary spheres of οἶκος (household) and πόλις (city). We then look into the concept of honour as sited in the multicultural region of Jerusalem, and the possible conflicts between gentile and Judaic ideas of honour especially as it affected benefaction. It will be shown that desire for honour underlies benefaction, and the benefactions of Herod and the Great and the Roman Emperor will be introduced.

³ Material in this paragraph from Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels: honour, 369-371; limited good, 370; confrontation, 371-372.
The ancient Mediterranean world held values, understandings and expectations far different from those of Western twenty-first-century culture. Malina and Neyrey indicate that now as in the past “the Mediterranean culture has been described in anthropological literature as a collectivist or group-oriented society.” Therefore benefaction must be considered in terms of its effect on the group. It is important for our reading of biblical texts to recognize contemporary Western culture as lying towards the extreme of the individualist type: it is almost the opposite of first-century Mediterranean culture in many ways. In considering both benefaction and slavery we have to keep in mind the critical importance of the group and its welfare, past, present, and future, as the orientation for Mediterranean persons in the biblical world, in advance of individual human rights or freedoms. In a very real sense, the group legitimates society.

Ancient Mediterranean cultures held values of group embeddedness, responsibility for others (particularly in respect of group honour), tradition (lack of change), doing what is expected (obedience), and group identity. Embeddedness implies that individuals lived in the psychosocial environment of the group, and the needs, opinions, values and identities of the group came first. In collectivist cultures, with high embeddedness, it is not appropriate for persons to have personal views, and any such ideas they may have should not be shared. ‘Truth’ refers not to private reflections, let alone to some objective standard, but to “conformity between what the ingroup thinks about some person, event, or thing, and what the private self believes and knows.” In other words, what the group believes is the truth. Benefaction was used by the rulers of

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5 Malina and Neyrey, Portraits of Paul, 7.
7 Malina and Neyrey, Portraits of Paul, 227-228.
the time to sway the group values of their peoples towards acceptance of their hegemony.

In collectivist cultures, persons are deeply attached to the groups they inhabit. One’s position in most groups is ascribed: a person is born with a certain place in a group, based upon birth order, gender and social status (e.g. slave or free) but sometimes honour can be achieved, by making benefactions, for example. In Luke-Acts, many groups compete for loyalty and authority, including the Roman-appointed Temple establishment run by the high priestly families (Luke 20:1-2), the Roman power enforced by Pilate (Luke 23:24), and the Roman client government of Herod (Luke 23:7). The Jesus group required people to transfer their loyalties away from their families, with consequent abandonment by their kin (Luke 21:16). It is important to recognise the degree to which people in collectivist cultures do not regard members of ‘outgroups’ (those outside the ingroup) as deserving of consideration, help, acceptance or even mercy. Mercy, indeed, is specifically intended for the rescue and protection of ingroup persons. These understandings of first-century collectivist values aid our comprehension of the position of slaves, who could be moved from place to place and group to group, passed around as property and so not cemented into the security of the group: see John 8:35, where the slave does not abide in the household on a permanent basis.

Most importantly for the position of Judas and the disciples, “the ingroup is responsible for the actions of each individual member.”11 The ingroup is responsible for the actions of each individual member. Here lies the source of disaster for Jesus and the disciples when faced with the defection of Judas to the threatening (literally), different, hostile outsiders: those who are almost “considered a different species” (Luke 22:2-8).

Benefaction was one way the colonial rulers (Roman and Herodian) attempted to make themselves insiders, or rather, to make the Israelites insiders in Greco-Roman terms. But honour could be lost, as well as gained. This understanding of the disciples as responsible for Judas’ behaviour is vital to understanding the dishonoured position of Jesus and his group as they become outsiders to the Jerusalem community (Luke 23:13-18; 22:56).

There were two spheres of action for the people of New Testament cultures: persons belonged to οἶκια (household) and πόλις (city). The Latin words for οἶκια make a slight distinction between domus, the actual building together with the family residing there, and familia, the extended family including clients, slaves, guests, and friends, controlled by the principal male, who is called dominus or paterfamilias.12 Certain elite women could be known as domina, a title which brought deference and the ability to control not only her household but sometimes also her life, through the use of slaves and clients for business undertakings: however, whether the female owner was elite or not, domina, or ‘mistress’ was the form of address used by slaves in all circumstances to the slaveholder.13 Schüssler Fiorenza introduced the term ‘kyriarchy’ to refer to “a complex social pyramid of graduated dominations and subordinations.”14 The source of this term is the Greek word κύριος meaning lord, master, or authority and designating in a household the dominus. In a public, political, or imperial context it refers to the ruler or head of affairs. The kin group was the structure where honour and security rested: it was the first group loyalty for most people. The language of πόλις often follows that of οἶκια, which was the “building-block and … model for the elaboration of larger political units.”15 This connectedness of πόλις and οἶκια conceptualisations, Schüssler Fiorenza points out, was based in Greek philosophical ideals and practices: “Active participation in

government was conditional not only upon citizenship but also upon the combined privilege of property, education, and freeborn male family status.”

16 When Jesus says benefactors dominate their subjects (κυριεύουσιν), the reference is to the political role of rulers and emperors as dominus. The individual slave owner dominated his or her slaves; the Roman Emperor dominated the entire imperial world.

The priestly castes in Jerusalem were already outsiders to the tribes of Israel in respect of their Hellenistic adaptations, their high status in a corrupted socio-economic environment, and their subjugation to imperial influence. 17 “Judaism consists in ancestral tradition, observation of the law and religious practice,” says Wallace-Hadrill, while Hellenism involves “a set of cultural practices centered on the gymnasium” as well as having a good grasp of the Greek language. 18 Judea had not been unfamiliar with the colonial situation since before the time of Alexander the Great. For example, in search of “Greek forms of prestige” the high priest Jason persuaded Antiochus IV to establish a palaestra and sports school, an action that provoked revolt (2 Macc 4:18; 4:12-15). Here the high priest encouraged a benefaction that had tragic results.

The Herodians, as Hellenistic clients of Rome, were yet more alien than the priests, while the Roman colonial officials were experienced as “foreign conquerors” utterly different from the local population (Luke 7:1-10). 19 An appeal to the Judaic establishment would inevitably bring in these colonial authorities, particularly in a matter of sedition, leading in Jesus’ case to the tragedy of the Crucifixion. Jerusalem was a contested city, sited between Roman political responsibility, Hellenistic cultural practices and Judaic religious requirements. This setting included benefaction as well as slavery.

Even the Temple authorities held slaves (Luke 22:50).

16 Schüssler Fiorenza, Jesus, Miriam’s Child, 14-15.
In the ancient world, honour is public reputation. It is both a claim to worth and status, and the public recognition of such worth. The public that matters is the ‘court of reputation’ formed of one’s own peers: honour is a peer group phenomenon. Honour must be public. There is no such thing as private honour. In the Roman Empire, honour brings rewards and privileges, while “publicly known loss of honour” brings public disgrace and rejection. This is dishonour, or shame. Honour decides “who can eat with whom, who sits at what places at a meal, who can open a conversation, who has the right to speak, and who is accorded an audience” as well as appropriate self-presentation in matters of dress, posture and manner. It decides how one must interact with others whether equal, superior or inferior in status. Malina calls honour “the core, the heart, the soul” of first-century Mediterranean society.

The value of honour pervades ancient literature from the Hebrew Bible to the Greek and Latin classics. Honour might be ascribed or achieved: ascribed through belonging to an esteemed family, for example; or achieved through notable deeds, such as acquiring a reputation as an outstandingly courageous soldier, or a liberal and generous benefactor. While benefactors, as noted above, add to their honour by generous public donations, slaves, as will be discussed, live entirely in dishonour. Philo, Josephus, Plutarch and others refer to the honours bestowed by emperors, kings, and cities, and honour belonging to public officials, prophets, and priests: they describe nobility, fame, “the desire for glory” and the seeking after great reputation. The Res Gestae Divi Augusti, an elaborate eulogia, describes itself as “a … copy of ‘The achievements of the Divine Augustus, by which he brought the world under the empire of the Roman people, and of the expenses which he bore for the state and people of Rome’; the original is engraved

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20 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Synoptic Gospels*: honour defined, 370; rewards, 371; honour decides, 370; heart and soul, 369.
on two bronze pillars set up at Rome.”

Here we have civic benefaction, military glory, and apparent self-sacrifice for the public good: such an inscription adheres to the principle that “great achievements merit great honours.” It is a description of the idealised first-century benefactor.

The words for ‘glory’ and ‘honour’ “refer to the same reality, that is, the public acknowledgement of one’s worth or social value.” Honour, then, is extremely serious: as Williams has it, today in the Western world “we find it hard to understand societies in which honour is ‘objectified’ as a matter of supreme public interest in such a way that an affront to one’s public dignity or standing in the eyes of society becomes something worth killing for.” Jesus again and again affronts the dignity of Pharisees and Temple authorities in the gospels, and they do seek his death (Luke 20:20; 22:1).

In summary, collectivist persons are devoted to ingroups while rejecting outsiders; their household and πόλις command loyalty and every member of a group is responsible for the actions of other members. Honour, or public reputation, was the greatest value in antiquity; Hellenism and Roman conquest provided elites who were culturally distant from the governed in Israel, and benefaction was used to create honour. Knowledge of the workings of honour and shame in the cultures of the Roman Empire is essential for understanding the cultural matrix in which slavery and benefaction both were held.

How to be Greek, or Foreign Honour

One risk to honour highlighted by the colonial standing of people in Luke’s narrative is the multicultural nature of the imperial environment. Wallace-Hadrill remarks that the Roman world gives good scope for examining “the complexities of cultural identity, especially the subtle layering of identities in the wake of passages of conquest and colonisation.”

The dominating Hellenistic culture of the first-century Mediterranean world was essentially Greek. Its Greek values were shared across social levels from the Roman Emperor through client kings such as Herod to elites at the local level in Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor. As deSilva has it, this was “also the majority culture, since Hellenism had by this time been penetrating local cultures in the Eastern Mediterranean” since the time of Alexander the Great.

Jerusalem, as Fredriksen notes, was “Judaism’s major pilgrimage site” and “had been the focus of efforts to Hellenize since at least the second century BCE,” so that Josephus, a priest of the Jerusalem elite, “speaks specifically of his bilingual education” in Hebrew, Aramaic, and also “Greek grammar, prose, and poetry.” Josephus was called a turncoat, dishonoured in the Jewish War.

Yet he became an honoured client of the Roman Emperor, producing histories for the winning side: a Jerusalem priest with a Hellenistic education.

Israel was drenched in Greco-Roman culture, and Jesus and his disciples could not avoid coming into contact with it (Luke 7:1-10; Acts 10:9-23): note that in both these examples the Roman officer is shown to have honour in the eyes of the Jewish ‘nation’: in the first example the honour comes through benefaction. Where traditional Judaism shared space with foreign values, the stresses on the social systems were immense.

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31 Joseph. *BJ* 3.349. The word used is προδότης and we shall see it applied to Judas at Luke 6:16. See also Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.
honour position of Jesus and the disciples is judged in this environment, where the elites aspire to Greco-Roman civilisation, while the crowds are prepared to support many forms of resistance (Luke 23:18-19).

The building of amphitheatres, racetracks, baths and temples throughout the empire provided the infrastructure for the Hellenistic way of life. These public buildings are the result of benefaction. At any of these places, persons would come into contact with people of other cultures, who might be eating different foods (Acts 10:9-23), having different sexual practices (Luke 7:1-10), and worshipping different gods. Egyptians, for example, tended to marry their sisters from villagers to royalty; brother-sister marriage became illegal everywhere in the Roman Empire only as late as 295 CE. In Israel, “there were many gradations of holiness”, but even for laypersons “the boundary between Jew and gentile is especially important so that the holiness of the Jewish race remains intact.” Peter is appalled, in Acts 10:14, at the suggestion that he should eat ‘unclean’ (gentile) food, for example. Judas, when possessed by Satan, goes to the Roman-appointed high priests with their Greco-Roman sympathies to turn in Jesus, a Jewish master of Torah (Luke 2:46-47) and exponent of the Kingdom of God.

In many ways, Judaic and Hellenistic cultures were opposites. What was honourable for Hellenism could be dishonourable for Judaism. While Judaic culture valued mental agility, first-century Greek culture revolved around the gymnasium and athletic performance. There was a distinct emphasis on the physical body: its beauty, its strength and its skill. This was especially true of the young male body. Athletes were naked in the gymnasium and baths would be undertaken naked; this was honourable for

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34 deSilva, Honor, Patronage, 257-258.
35 deSilva, Honor, Patronage, 37.
Greeks and for the Romans it was a learned behaviour in pursuit of ‘Greekness’ [my term].37 Honour, position and influence came to Israelites who took up opportunities for advancement with the colonial rulers and their friends.38 Some obtained high preferment during the first century by distancing themselves from Judaic roots, even to attempting to erase the marks of circumcision.39 Even priestly families of Jerusalem aspired to attain the status of Greeks in the early empire.40 It is in this environment that Jesus represented the Kingdom of God to the Jerusalem crowds.41

Attaining ‘Greekness’ was a process of making oneself “continuously into a hellene by behaving like a hellene, in language and culture” through παιδεία, education in Greek ways of thought, manner of dress, and ways of life.42 Hellenistic identity was honourable in Rome and the provinces so much that, in Wallace-Hadrill’s words, a Gaul might esteem himself “more Greek than any Roman, even more Greek than any Greek of his day.”43 ‘Greekness’ then was both honourable and fashionable in the first century, hence the Hellenistic cultural identity. Greek culture attained through παιδεία was “a language that enabled members of the educated classes from as far apart as Arles and Arabia to meet” on equal ground, possessing the difficult skills of ancient rhetoric that “provided a permanent background music to the consensus in favor of Roman rule” that was nurtured by prominent civic authorities across the empire.44 The underlying purpose was to legitimate the Roman presence. Clearly a potential for conflict exists, between παιδεία and Torah. By this brief look at Greco-Roman culture, we see that Hellenism as

39 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 39ff. Circumcision was viewed as barbaric mutilation of the ideal male body in Greco-Roman culture; men were naked while engaging in business or politics in the crowded environment of the baths. Fagan, *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*, 211-212.
41 Jesus insists at Luke 18:32-33 that it is the gentiles who will kill him.
44 Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 39-40. This was true from the early empire onwards.
well as benefaction acted to influence the peoples of the Empire to form their identities as Roman subjects.

In contrast, Torah was the essence of Jewish culture. But how to keep Torah was under dispute. “The Jews were a nation of experts,” says Fredriksen, who all valued “the Land of Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple, and Torah” and were devoted “to the imageless worship of the one God of the universe,” but “the scope for interpretive debate stretched on forever” and constant acrimonious argument and conflict circled around how the Law should be fulfilled. Nonetheless, to come up with the right observance was honourable. Jesus is critical of the scribes, the nominal experts, whose behaviour fails to align with their knowledge (Luke 20:46-47). Correct interpretation of Torah was of utmost importance to religious Jews. In the gospels this is seen in the many sharp questions put to Jesus in quest of interpretations from his teachings. To hold his exceptional honour position, Jesus must always best his opponents (Luke 20:39-40). There were also subcultures: Greek and Roman philosophers, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and prominent teachers in Judaism, including Jesus, placed different emphases on honourable and dishonourable actions (Luke 20:27). Thus Jesus and his disciples are in a contested position in Israel, a location far from unified but rather full of competing opinions, practices, and values.

In summary, while Hellenistic culture placed great emphasis on the physical body together with Greek language, education, and philosophical exploration, for Jewish culture religious observance based upon Torah was the principal matter for debate and mental exertion. The Temple, centre of religious ceremonies for Israel, was corrupted by alien values, particularly monetary values (Luke 19:46). Jesus and the disciples had entered into a multicultural city in Jerusalem, and as we will now see, the political establishment was deeply questionable as well.

45 Fredriksen, Jesus of Nazareth, 61-62.
46 deSilva, Honor, Patronage, 37.
In the first century, a ruler would need to be honourable: he or she should be in a position to receive public approbation (sometimes through benefaction, and the accompanying expressions of praise). Ascribed honour derives from birth: birth order, birthplace, birth family; for example, Luke 1:5-6 describes the qualifications of John the Baptist’s heritage. Or honour could be acquired by attaining a good reputation for exemplary courage, generosity (typically through benefaction), loyalty to a patron, or piety (in Judaism strict Torah observance). Note that loyalty to a patron was specifically honourable: this will become important in our later discussion of Judas. This need to legitimate rule through honour is the setting for Jesus’ comments regarding “the rulers of the nations” who participate in benefaction.

Honour is the value underlying benefaction. Yet as we have seen, in Jerusalem there were contrasting kinds of honour. There was the traditional Israelite honouring of wisdom and learning, that even young people could attain (Luke 2:46-47). And then there was the value of wealth to which the Romans and their friends the Herods and their friends in influential positions in Israel were devoted. The agrarian economic structure of antiquity allowed for concentration of land and riches in the hands of a very few wealthy families. Herod the Great had brought into being a set of landholding notables “whose only claim to authority was that they enjoyed his favour.” The Roman side of the honour equation in the provinces was about money (Luke 20:24-25). So in addition to a Greco-Roman cultural ecology, there was a set of economic practices, in Jerusalem but impacting significantly on the countryside, that Luke is constantly critiquing. Benefaction, or at least the source of the funding for benefaction, is one side of the attempt to legitimate power through money.

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Furthermore, as Lopez notes, benefaction in the Roman world of antiquity reinforced “elite cooperation with Roman constructions of reality in the colonies and provinces,” where “the kind of local identity permissible to display in the Roman imperial system was limited to what the Romans found acceptable from their subjects.”

The Roman Empire provides the overarching context to the secular setting for the narrative of Luke-Acts, so an indication of what that empire required and how its expectations were identified to the populace is now in order.

The reality in power relations and financial exploitation was simple: “taxation was everything to the Romans; it was the very raison d’être of their empire.” Nero instructed one provincial governor to see that no one in his province had anything left after his tax-gatherers had passed through, because the emperor had need of money.

When Luke’s Jesus is asked whether it is lawful to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor (Luke 20:22) he replies “give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Luke 20:25 NRSV). But everything is Caesar’s. Marshall notes that “the reference is to the taxes imposed in connection with the Roman rule of Judea”; this precise tax must be paid in the “particular coinage … required for payment of Roman taxes” and the coin itself “symbolised the power of the emperor.” The silver denarius (δηνάριον) was stamped with the head of the reigning emperor and the superscription (ἐπιγραφή) would have read: Ti. Caesar Divi Aug. F. Augustus, making reference to the emperor’s role as ‘son of the deified Augustus’ and thus a blasphemy in Jerusalem (Luke 20:24). This pericope refers back to the importance of the census taking place at the time of Jesus’ birth: the “primary purpose of the census was for the

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assessment of Roman tribute,” and the King James translation does not overestimate when it renders Luke 2:1 as “there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.” It is important to understand that the meaning of conquest, of conquering a nation or a people, implies that one has taken possession of it, and them, and everything belonging to them. That is certainly the Roman understanding of the matter.

The Roman Empire was ruled politically by persons of proper birth and background and political action was seen as “the application of force to attain collective goals” through taking goods, especially land, from outgroups. Economics and religion were not separate from politics, and politics was an elite activity performed mainly for the benefit of large landowners. Jerusalem, like other ancient cities, housed “a centralized set of social relationships among elites” that “took on spatial dimensions by means of territoriality.” Architecture and city planning revolved around dominance of space according to the power and honour status of the great families, including the priestly families that conducted Israel’s political religion: the Temple dominated the cityscape and its surrounding landscape. The Temple benefactions of Herod the Great attempted to legitimate his rule, while he himself was a Roman client. We must now investigate the situation of the Herods, as putative rulers in Israel.

What makes a mode of governance legitimate? The Lukan Jesus shows many marks of charismatic authority as described by Weber, as one who can provide “proof of the Spirit and of power” and show in a visible way that he has “an intimate relationship

with the divine.”56 The act of forgiveness, for example, comes from such legitimate spiritual authority, as is debated at Luke 5:20-24.

In the Roman Empire much depended upon descent of traditional lineage to legitimate royalty, yet rulers also called upon aspects of sacredness to vindicate their domination of peoples, resources, and territories. Where clear traditional lineage was in dispute civil wars and revolts could ensue: the war of Antony and Octavian is a defining example for the Roman Empire. Herod the Great was determined to bring Greco-Roman civilization to his kingdom: the presence of a Greek-speaking court full of people who all had Roman or Greek names indicated these intentions, while his coinage displayed Greek inscriptions and Hellenistic symbolism.57 The refurbished Temple was Herod’s greatest benefaction: Marshall refers to it as “an important symbol for Israel, but also as the grandest reminder of Herodian rule in Jerusalem.”58 But the Herodian rulers, partly of Arab descent, were not sufficiently Jewish by blood to establish trust within Israel, and this perception of a tainted kingdom gave rise to the demand for an alternative government, with many messianic movements towards a purified nation.59 The Lukan Jesus represents such an alternative as the Kingdom of God.

In summary, Hellenism sat uneasily beside Judaism in Israel; some embraced it, some despised it. Benefaction was used to westernise the lands, as the Herods turned towards Rome with its fashionable Greek culture. They turned away from traditions of strict Judaic observance (Luke 3:19-20), and this was opposed. The Romans, on the other hand, were interested in tax and money. So the Herods’ benefactions were concerned with compliance to Roman domination, an attempt to legitimate the provincial status of Israel as a Roman-occupied territory.

59 Fenn, Death of Herod, 39, 64.
Benefaction: Publicity, Celebrity, and Money

Benefaction exists to provide honour to benefactors, although it often has real beneficial effects. In this section we discuss the activities of the πόλις where most benefaction takes place. We will see how Herod the Great, a Roman client, sought to legitimize his rule by lavish benefactions which assisted his promotion of the westernisation of his territories and especially Jerusalem. The ideas of concordia (harmony) and gratia (thanksgiving) in the context of benefaction will be introduced, and the methods by which the elite gain money for benefaction will be displayed: taxation, confiscation, and corruption, including the major role of the Jerusalem Temple as a bank.

The πόλις is the major site of benefaction in the New Testament world. In Luke and Acts the πόλις is the site of public events as at Luke 9:10-17 and Acts 19:23-40. At Luke 13:33 Jesus indicates that “it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem (NRSV).” Political events take place in Jerusalem, then under the authority of the Roman governor.

The πόλις in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire would comprise more than a ‘city’ in the modern sense. It would be an “established place” given this status by the Roman emperor, and as a πόλις would have the right to a governing council which controlled not only the city proper but “a surrounding territory, usually including villages under the centre’s jurisdiction.”60 The πόλις was the site of benefaction. Brown says that from classical times to late antiquity “giving was about a very special sort of love—amor civicus, love for the city and its citizens” expressed through benefaction.”61 Herod the Great was the benefactor in Jerusalem, determined to “foster westernization” which meant “pleasing Rome and imitating Greece” by means of “a series of magnificent

buildings and political progresses.” Levine calls attention to the Hellenistic entertainment venues, amphitheatre and racetrack available to the general public, and shows from inscriptions and iconography that funerary monuments using Greco-Roman styles are found throughout the city and belong to “a wide spectrum of socio-economic groups.” Jerusalem, Levine says, was at once “the most Jewish” of the cities of Palestine, home of the Temple and its priesthood as well as Judaic sects and cults and the site of major religious festivals, and was at the same time “the most Hellenized of Jewish cities, in terms of its population, languages, institutions, and general cultural ambiance.” Thus benefactors and their benefactions would surround the disciples at the Last Supper, and so would the evidences of domination, both Roman and Herodian.

Lavish outpouring of money brought celebrity to the great benefactors: Josephus notes specifically that Herod the Great “surpassed his predecessors in spending money” in his quest for fame. In his benefactions, Herod emulated his patron Augustus, whose “buildings (sic) activities were prolific, made possible by the great fortune he had amassed from taxes and business deals such as the exploitation of the Cyprus copper mines.” By his very lavishness Herod hoped to bring his Middle Eastern kingdom into a changed condition, just as Jesus, John the Baptist, and other prophets hoped to restore a more just and merciful form of traditional Judaism, which Jesus legitimates as the Kingdom of God. One way or another, things were going to change.

Religion and economics are not separate institutions in the New Testament but are embedded in ὀικία and πόλις. Since the family and its ὀἶκος provided the most essential support network for ancient Mediterranean persons, to lose one’s place in the

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63 Levine, Judaism and Hellenism, 91-92.
64 Levine, Judaism and Hellenism, 94-95.
65 Joseph, AJ 15.413.
family was a disaster affecting livelihood, social position, and status before the gods.\textsuperscript{67} Jesus’ advice to “hate father and mother” (Luke 14:26 NRSV) is a drastic call to reject everything one has been brought up to respect and everything that in fact provides the first line of protection against a violent and largely uncaring world. Patterson’s description of slaves as “natally alienated” underscores the vulnerability of slaves, who have no kin, no lasting group protection (John 8:35).\textsuperscript{68} There is, however, for some the prospect of a surrogate household which can provide refuge and affiliated ties of brotherhood or sisterhood: a fictive kin group.\textsuperscript{69} Levine says that “Jesus’ program was not about preserving the family but about dismantling it in favour of fictive kin groups” by people leaving their families (Luke 18:29-30).\textsuperscript{70} This can apply across \textit{oikia} and \textit{polis} and in the latter case, as will be seen, it becomes revolutionary. Jesus is advising people to leave their former worlds, in fact, to ‘hate’ them, in order to take up legitimate positions in the Kingdom of God.

‘Hate’ in ancient terminology does not imply hot-bloodedness. It is rather extremely cold, denoting almost total detachment or indifference toward the sufferings or fate of someone from another group. Whereas ‘love’ means devotion, attachment, loyalty and trust for one’s insiders, ‘hate’ recognises that all outsiders are to be shunned and feared due to the principle of limited good.\textsuperscript{71} Therefore it becomes possible to do or see done to a hated group or person any kind of violence or degradation. The model of Limited Good was developed by Foster to explain the concepts of modern peasant societies; however, there are ancient examples that show the existence of this kind of thinking in Mediterranean cultures from very early times. Based upon the limited

\textsuperscript{67} Malina and Rohrbaugh, \textit{Synoptic Gospels}, 414.
\textsuperscript{68} Orlando Patterson, \textit{Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 13.
\textsuperscript{69} Malina and Rohrbaugh, \textit{Synoptic Gospels}, 414.
\textsuperscript{71} Malina and Rohrbaugh, \textit{Synoptic Gospels}, 380-381.
availability of land, the peasant concept is that everything is already owned by someone, so any attempt to get more must necessarily lead to loss for someone else. Life is a zero-sum game with the result that people do not want to appear to gain more than their neighbours, because this will be viewed as theft and will create envy, with consequent sanctions, including the evil eye. Iamblichus refers to those who do not wish to give honour to others, because in so doing they deprive themselves (of the limited honour available), and Fronto advises Marcus Aurelius to “stamp out one vice of mutual envy and jealousy among your friends, that they may not, when you have shown attention or done a favour to another, think that this is so much taken from or lost to themselves.”

Note that at this elite level, honour is the most limited as well as the greatest good. The ordinary person’s view is seen in the New Testament, where many more things are restricted for lesser persons. The Syrophoenician woman reassures Jesus that she does not ask for any of the limited goods reserved for the children, but only for the crumbs that dogs would get otherwise (Mark 7:28). So when the action of Satan through Judas deprives the Jesus group of honour, it is a quality in limited supply, and difficult to replace. Honour, of course, intimately affects the legitimacy of a rule.

“In the Mediterranean world,” says deSilva, “there was not just a single dominant culture within a given area, but minority cultures set within dominant cultures.” The cultures within the land of Israel included, but were not limited to, the Israelite culture historically dominant over a Canaanite dispossession; a Greek culture representing civilisation to both relatively recent Macedonian/Greek conquerors (and their Herodian political descendants) and to Roman imperial rulers of even more recent date of conquest; and also Roman military, legal and administrative cultures including obligations


to Roman deities and especially the Roman Emperor. There were non-Judaic cultures such as Samaritans and Phoenicians. There were minority cultures such as schools of philosophy or religious sects existing within dominant cultures, which could be joined voluntarily, and had their own loyalties, values and codes of honour and shame. Such schools or sects varied in their degree of exclusiveness, with the group surrounding Jesus of Nazareth expected to separate from all prior ties.

The disciples of Jesus practiced “social renunciation” by leaving their kin groups including their work responsibilities.\textsuperscript{74} “Alienation from the economy is apparently compensated by the patronage of supporters,” and many of these patrons are women (Luke 8:3). Patronage and benefaction were closely connected enterprises, so there is here a difference between the patronage and benefaction that assisted the existing order, and the patronage that encouraged another dimension. The alternate social structure of the Kingdom of God is threatened by the dishonourable defection of Judas to the powers of the πόλις.

Who, then, was Judas ‘called Iscariot’ and why did he accept money to betray his master (Luke 22:3-5)? Acts 1:16-19 describes the field that Judas buys with this money and his fall and death in this ‘Field of Blood’. It appears to me that with Judas we come close to the conflict between οἶκια and πόλις: the two realms that should ideally be able to exist together but here are shown as radically apart. In Chapter Two we will observe how Satan turns Judas from οἰκία (his fictive kin group) towards the πόλις and its representatives in the Jerusalem Temple and ultimately the Roman authorities, the same who are so liberal in their benefactions.

The practice of benefaction was one method ancient Mediterranean societies used to promote concordia or harmony in household, city, nation, and empire. \textit{Concordia}
means harmony in the sense of ‘agreement’ or ‘union’ and in Roman practice when conquered nations agreed to become part of the Roman Empire concordia had been achieved: typically the agreement of the lesser to the terms of the greater party is the ideal.75 Benefaction was a major contributor to honour as the “patron provides for his client access to scarce resources that are not universally accessible,” and the obligation of the recipient is to return the gift with public “expressions of loyalty and honour.” Because the existing social order and situations of economic privilege and want were seen as the result of the will of God (or gods), social relationships were based on inequality in power, status, and authority (and of course wealth) in such a way that all things necessary for social life would be mediated through a ladder of relations connecting the weaker party (client) with the stronger and more well-resourced (patron).

It follows that a public benefactor (most notably the Roman Emperor) became in a sense the patron of everyone.76 To become the patron of everyone is obviously a powerful legitimating factor for a ruler.

Pertinent inequalities were founded in age, gender, origins, and social location, and a client’s approach to a patron usually had to be directed through third parties: brokers or friends.77 In the Roman Empire, “public figures, from municipal administrators to the emperors, were not only expected, but were supposed, to use their positions to bestow beneficia on friends.” Favouritism in public life was considered a virtue. In ancient moral terms, “a benefactor was not supposed to bestow a favour

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77 Moxnes, “Patron-Client Relations,” 244.
(beneficium or officium) with its return in mind.” Nevertheless, as a result of favouritism, a return should occur: the transaction seems to have required reciprocation of the apparently voluntary gift so strongly that both Cicero and Seneca despised the ingratius homo as “among the lowest forms of social life.” So the apparently voluntary favour is followed by an apparently voluntary return. Favouritism in family or kinship relations, within the household or ingroup, was similarly constituted: biblical examples include Joseph and Israel (Gen 37:3); David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18:3); and Jesus and the beloved disciple (John 19:26). All of these situations have a potential for conflict or challenge, nonetheless. Patronage legitimates the hierarchical structure that reinforces social inequalities: it is this structure that Luke calls into question with such statements as “all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Luke 14:11 NRSV).

In spite of an ideology of disinterestedness, “a return was nevertheless expected” in the form of gratia, and Saller offers the verbs used with gratia to indicate “that the relationship was thought of as something like that of debtor and creditor.”

Gratia goes further than the surface ideas of loyalty, praise, and thanks, though all these are expected: Saller says “it represents an attitude rather than an action”, meaning “goodwill,” and “in connection with social exchange it took on a more specific sense analogous to favour or voluntas.” Voluntas, or “willingness,” has connotations of “free will” or “inclination” and “doing something of one’s own accord,” so in spite of the debtor/creditor implication the ideal is one of free reciprocity. Saller refers to Mauss in finding that in the Roman Empire the “gift” of benefaction called forth a return in the

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80 Saller offers “debere, referre, pendere, persolvere and reddere.” Material in this paragraph from Saller, *Personal Patronage*: gratia, 21; voluntas, 21.
same way that Mauss examined in his studies of the social nature of the gift.82 Benefactors therefore expected a legitimation of their social standing and in many cases rulership as the return of benefaction.

The wealth that creates benefaction does not spring from nowhere. Usury, bribery and taxation were some features of the corrupt financial environment supporting the riches of the elite. In the imperial system, taxation was especially important. Hanson and Oakman recall the important distinction between ancient and modern structures and ideologies of nations. To use the words ‘nation’ or ‘state’ or even ‘country’ in the modern sense is anachronistic because the idea of ‘nation-state’ only developed as late as 1648 in Europe, following the Thirty Years’ War.83 Territory of rulers was personally governed in a very detailed way by administrators directly accountable to kings, patrons, and ultimately the emperor himself, to whom the smallest questions might be addressed, as is demonstrated by the letters of Pliny to Trajan, whose panegyric to that emperor “offers a study on how one speaks to and about power in the imperial age.”84 Pontius Pilate, as another imperial administrator directly responsible to the Roman Emperor, is known to history as a tactless and severe governor who provoked riots by bringing military standards bearing the Emperor’s imago into Jerusalem, executed dissidents who objected to his use of Temple funds for the civilising mission of bringing water into the city through building an aqueduct, and was finally recalled to face the Emperor after attacking Samaritan pilgrims and following a complaint from Judean leaders.85 Whatever happened in a Roman province was thus ultimately overseen by the Roman Emperor himself, including the collection of tax.

82 Saller, Personal Patronage, 22.
83 Hanson and Oakman, Palestine in the Time of Jesus, 70.
An immediate result of Roman overlordship in a province was taxation. Taxes were heavy and assiduously collected. In the lands of Israel, direct tax, ‘tribute’, was on average 12.5 percent on the harvest as applied to land, and was collected in kind: it was the administration’s responsibility to see it “remitted in full and on time.”\textsuperscript{86} Crop failure meant debt, and debt if unable to be paid led to loss of land and in some cases to debt slavery. Borrowing against future crops placed the family’s tenure of land at risk as farmers seeking loans went to Herodian or priestly sources; they had to use land as security, and each unpaid loan due to bad conditions increased the debt exponentially, with foreclosure often consequent. Loss of land is obviously dishonourable. Herod Antipas viewed Galilee “as the main source of his income” and created a “growing bureaucracy closely connected to” his court to collect taxes and levy labour conscription both for public works (benefaction) and “to develop his privately held lands.”\textsuperscript{87} And to these Roman and Herodian taxes were added Temple tithes and religious donations and offerings to the Jerusalem priestly establishment. Taxation was the opposite face of benefaction: it was the mark of legitimation by power.

Money, in the form of coins was minted for government use in paying troops, coinage that returned to the Roman government in the form of taxes collected and levies received. Although owners of land benefited from money and the presence of coins, (for land value could be reckoned in money, as could rents, fines, and again, taxes), most trading was done by barter.\textsuperscript{88} Because only “authorized coinage” could be used to pay debts and taxes, money-changers had to be used and paid a commission to convert

\textsuperscript{86} Material in this paragraph from Roetzel, \textit{World That Shaped the New Testament}, 28. Customs duties were required from ports, and duties also were charged at external and internal land boundaries and could be costed at anything from 2 to 5 percent inside the province to 25 percent at the frontiers.

\textsuperscript{87} Material in this paragraph from Horsley and Silberman, \textit{The Message and the Kingdom}: foreclosure, 28; Herod, 26; Temple, 28.

\textsuperscript{88} Material in this paragraph from Stegemann and Stegemann, \textit{Jesus Movement}: coins, 39; barter, 39.
bronze or copper coins into the silver denarius required for “the imperial poll tax” while “the didrachma temple tax was payable in Tyrian silver.”

Banking was known only to cities, and a bank such as the Jerusalem Temple was where the holdings of debt archives were kept. Oakman says “it is important to keep in mind that the Romans monopolized the right to coin; moreover, Rome or Rome’s agents apparently controlled very carefully those who would be allowed to exchange money.”

There were treasuries and storehouses of all kinds of wealth, material as well as in coin, in the Jerusalem Temple, which under Herod acted as a mint, exchange facility, place of deposit, sales point for pilgrimage goods, place of tax receipt and “the hub of a bank system that serviced sizeable money-exchanges and loans.” Thus the Temple and its religious establishment were not outside the practice of legitimation through power, but closely bound to it through its fiscal management.

Cities in first-century Roman provinces were an advantage to imperial rule because the local government could take on tasks that would “render practical services to the imperial power,” including tax collection, conscription, and keeping the peace (where no military presence was required) as well as maintenance of public infrastructure and provision of public events, embassies and the lesser courts. The domination of the local elite was guaranteed by the “liturgical system” whereby the wealthy “members of a community saw to the performance of essential services and responsibilities by payment in cash or kind or by personal service.” This might include benefactions. So by imperial design “the economy of the temple operations, including money-changing, was firmly in control of Rome’s imperial agents, that is, members of the approved provincial network

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91 Oakman, “Batteries of Power,” 180-181. Material goods would have included rich priestly garments, animals for sacrifice and ‘devoted goods’ for the Temple, all in great number: 179.
92 Material in this paragraph from Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987): practical services, 32-33; liturgical system, 33.
who benefited Rome as they looked to their own interests.”93 Therefore local elites shored up the Roman occupation by benefactions among other means, and this meant legitimating the role of the Roman Emperor.

The Roman Empire, including its finance, was “in the power of one man” to an extent unimaginable in today’s economies. At the death of Augustus, his will provided the entire “financial and military position of the empire” and this was information unknown to the Senate in Rome or other administrators (in the complete absence of an impartial civil service): how many troops were stationed where, how much money was owed to the Emperor and what assets were “in the public purse” and who, among the imperial slaves and freedmen, kept the records and accounts of the imperial finances.94

And so we see that the enterprise of benefaction, the ‘liturgies’ in the hands of the rich, and the personal, honour-driven, competitive nature of all public services depended on vast realms of debt, obligation and confiscation. And we can comprehend Jesus’ complaint that “from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away” (Luke 8:18 NRSV).

The Roman Army was the presence underlying Roman government in the provinces, as well as in Rome itself. And one of the significant tasks of the army was to see that the tax was paid. We will now look at the tax situation in the lands of Israel, including coinage (Luke 20:22), Temple taxes (the δραχμίας mentioned at Luke 15:8), and the hegemony of the Herodian and colonial rulers with their consequent lack of mercy towards the ruled.

At the back of both taxation and benefaction in first-century Roman provinces, there was military power. Luke sets the birth of Jesus in the reign of Augustus, at the time of a census taken for the purpose of determining liability for tax (Luke 2:1) in the

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governorship of one Quirinius in Syria (Luke 2:2). Publius Sulpicius Quirinius was legate in Syria in 6 CE and was responsible for ordering a census “to determine how much tribute Rome should expect from Judea.” Southern notes that the provinces were usually governed by ex-consuls “with two or more legions, but if there was only one legion, the governor was usually an ex-praetor, and he commanded the legion as well as governing the province.” The legion responsible for territory in Israel was based in Syria, and the prefect of Judea was “under the supervision of the legate of Syria, who was a Roman senator and who commanded Roman soldiers.” Pilate, as a prefect of the lesser equestrian status, had only auxiliary troops at his base in Caesarea and stationed at the Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem: these were probably formerly Herod’s troops, although Roman-trained and commanded, meaning that the Romans effectively occupied Herod’s establishments as well. Thus the whole of Luke’s gospel is set within this military matrix: the Kingdom of God encased in a secular cell.

Crossan describes the role of the army in “province-building” as building “well-paved all-weather roads (no mud) and high arched all-weather bridges (no flood)” so the army could move with all “baggage and equipment at a guaranteed fifteen miles a day to crush any rebellion anywhere.” In the first century this was generally desirable for the Romans: the lands of Israel were particularly prone to rebellion and in 70 CE Jerusalem would be levelled after a long and bitter war. Schüssler Fiorenza points out that “Pilate’s identification of Jesus as ‘King of the Jews’ constitutes a very early explanation” of Jesus’

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95 “And it came to pass in those days, that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.” Luke 2:1 (King James Version).
98 Material in this paragraph from Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 28.
crucifixion; she sees the Roman imperial system as “victimization” and Jesus’ execution as Roman reaction to the “potential political implications” of his teachings.\footnote{Schüssler Fiorenza, \textit{Jesus, Miriam's Child}, 110.}

Luke also foresees the fall of Jerusalem in Jesus’ woe pronounced at Luke 19:43-44: “your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side,” noting that not one stone will be left upon another “because you did not recognise the time of your visitation from God (Luke 19:43 NRSV).” This is clearly hindsight, agreeing as it does with the war descriptions of Josephus. In the final analysis, the Romans would enforce the legitimation of their power with blasting force and unrelenting violence. The connection between Roman political and military dominance is made explicit in “the most evocative images of the triumph to have survived from antiquity” on the Arch of Titus: “Titus in his chariot celebrates his Triumph over the Jews, held jointly with his father Vespasian, after the sack of Jerusalem in 70” and here “the booty from the Temple, including the distinctive menorah, is carried shoulder-high in procession through Rome.”\footnote{Mary Beard, \textit{The Roman Triumph} (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 43.} Another celebration of the victory over Israel was promulgated through a series of coins, known as the \textit{Judaea Capta} series, issued to mark the victory.\footnote{Goodman, \textit{Rome and Jerusalem}, 432.} The use of coins to denote both domination of empire and submission of provinces was part of a system of visual representation that is consistent throughout the empire, “articulates and naturalizes power relationships” and results in “imperially produced and managed spaces.”\footnote{Lopez, \textit{Apostle to the Conquered}, 28.} One method of managing public space is via benefaction.

The idea of hegemony comes from the Greek \textit{ἱγεμονία} which refers to a leader, authority, or governor, and particularly to the sovereignty of a ‘state’ (as in ancient Greece) over others: the Roman equivalent is \textit{imperium}, which Plutarch uses to denote the
Roman Emperor’s reign.\textsuperscript{104} From our look at the power, \textit{auctoritas}, and comprehensive control held by the Roman Emperor, as described above, and the financial and military oppression levied upon first-century Israel, we can see how it plays out that the “key to power is knowledge, and true power is held with the conviction that the ruler knows better than the ruled, and must convince the ruled that whatever the colonial master does is for the benefit of the ruled.”\textsuperscript{105} It also follows that the enterprise of benefaction is a means of such convincement and such apparent benefit.

The Kingdom of God: Another Way

The need for a Kingdom of God arises out of the misrule of the powers of this world. We will examine in this section the extortionate measures of the Roman Empire and the Jerusalem Temple establishment, including the tribute tax, the prevalence of debt, the Temple exactions in kind and in cash, including the Temple tax and its eventual fate, and the advice of John the Baptist to soldiers and tax collectors (Luke 3:10-14). The virtue of landholding in first-century Israel, and the vice of greed will be canvassed, as well as the consequences of shame. While greed was disgraceful, the most honourable way of acquiring land was by conquest: much of the Hebrew Bible attests to this, and it is the foundation of the Roman Empire, displayed in such works as the Aeneid. Luke presents the Kingdom of God, in contrast, as a space free of shame, where the rich no longer exert their power, a spiritual and political transformation where all the usual values no longer apply.

Jesus refers to the Kingdom of God ninety times in the gospels, and this rule of God, or placing the whole world under the rulership of God as \textit{paterfamilias}, is intended


to bring about peace, forgiveness, mercy, justice and liberation: “The Reign of God is the
total overturning and transfiguring of the present condition of ourselves and the cosmos,
purified from all evils and filled with the condition of God.”106 Green says that at Luke
22:25, “Luke calls no special attention to singularly wicked kings or to persons who are
particularly abusive in their exercise of authority.”107 Instead, the observation is that the
regular pattern of behaviour for rulers and authorities is aimed toward their own
advancement in honour. Further, in Roman antiquity “benefaction was not managed
centrally, as though wealth would be distributed where needs were generally agreed,” but
“at the whim of givers.”108 Wealth provided the means to benefaction and thus to control
and high status. So what was being legitimated by benefaction was the rule of the
wealthy.

Malina gives his “best analogy” for the system the Romans applied in their
empire as “the social institution prevailing in Southern Italy for several centuries”
typically known as ‘organized crime’, and this system “reached a point of nearly all-
embracing societal control in the circum-Mediterranean” in Roman antiquity.109 Given
that, as we have seen, neither religion nor economics were free-standing ideologies in the
ancient world, but both were embedded in domains of kinship and politics, an appeal to
the kingdom of God must have a political as well as religious expectation. The Romans
had “a near monopoly on physical violence” and operated by a method Malina compares
to an “enterprise syndicate” which “provided real services for elites and their retainers,
such as land acquisition, slaves, taxes for elites and ingroup clients” while as a “power
syndicate” it “sought merely to control without providing any service to outgroups, that

106 Pedro Casaldáliga and José María Vigil, *The Spirituality of Liberation* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates,
1994), 80.
is, to the subject peoples.”110 We have seen that the benefactions of the Herodians and the Roman Emperor supported the westernisation of Israel and the Hellenistic way of life, and also provided room for the presence of Roman military at the Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem. So the money-changers’ tables in the Temple “represented tax-collection points and perpetual debt and arrears” and therefore “Jesus’ critique implied the entirety of the Roman money system, just as God’s rule could not be proclaimed without confronting Caesar’s.”111 Even when benefaction had real benefits, like Pilate’s aqueduct to bring water into Jerusalem, the results could be tragic. Classical tragedies “stage the world of the polis, political choices … and their consequences.”112 In Pilate’s case, use of the Temple funds caused a riot, in which “a large number” of civilians were clubbed and died, “some from the blows, others in the stampede which followed.”113 Underlying the benefaction, therefore, was the Roman road on which marched violence and subjugation.

According to Flusser, Jesus “is the only Jew of ancient times known to us who preached not only that people were on the threshold of the end of time, but that the new age of salvation had already begun.”114 It begins with John the Baptist’s call to repentance (Luke 3:3). For the Hebrew prophets, the whole community is commanded to repent, change abusive attitudes and practices, and refrain from exploiting the poor and the helpless: it is the prophets’ understanding that injustices stem from the laws, the ongoing political favouritism and financial corruption, and the “prevailing customs and the accepted mores.”115 When John is asked: “What then shall we do?” he replies that tax collectors should become honest, soldiers must forbear from extortion and threats, and

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those with resources share with those who have none (Luke 3:10-14 NRSV). The reaction of Herod Antipas was to throw John into prison (Luke 3:20).

Flusser explains that “according to both Jesus and the rabbis, the kingdom of heaven emerges, indeed, out of God’s might but it is realized upon earth” by humanity, and further, there are persons already “living in the kingdom of God.”

The rabbis believed that the kingdom was “an unchanging reality,” while for Jesus, in contrast, there is a moment in time when “the kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11:20 NRSV). This kingdom is meant to spread throughout the world, a realm that expands to embrace ever more people into God’s domain, “a realm into which one may enter and find one’s inheritance, a realm where there are both great and small.” Thus the existing theocracy was not a stable entity for the Lukan Jesus, but something new had entered the debate, and it was not a kingdom maintained by wealthy benefactors.

The Jerusalem Temple swallowed resources and these were provided by taxes in coin and in kind. Architects and engineers, woodworkers and stoneworkers, plumbers, roofers, builders and labourers as well as many others were employed on the Temple works until 62 CE when at the completion of the work eighteen thousand men lost their jobs. The families supplying the ongoing needs of the Temple are named in history and represented among the elites, who had “traditional estate lands in those areas (Galilee) or by longstanding commercial links with powerful families (Nabatea).” These elites are benefactors of the Temple, who nevertheless might well be dominating the countryside and the workers on their estates.

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117 Flusser, The Sage from Galilee, 81.
118 The Jesus group has its own benefactors in the form of women supporting it “out of their resources” (Luke 8:2-3).
119 Joseph. AJ 20.219. They were set to mending the roads, another benefaction. Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem, 60.
120 Material in this paragraph from Hanson and Oakman, Palestine in the Time of Jesus, 150-151.
Herod the Great twice married into the families of the high priests: two women each named Mariamme whose task was to help legitimate his rule because he was not entirely Jewish by blood and thus not entitled to be high priest himself. In fact, he was a Roman appointment. The high priests and the scribes (including lawyers, administrators, treasurers and secretaries of the religious establishment) were related to one another by favouritism and nepotism, while the elders from outside Jerusalem itself were descended from important families and controlled local power. To support this oligarchy each Jewish male had to pay 2 denarii per year towards the Temple sacrifices. (After the fall of Jerusalem this tax continued to be paid to Rome although the Temple no longer existed. Renamed the Fiscus Judaicus, the tax was required of all Jews throughout the empire and instead of supporting the Jewish religion it now rebuilt the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter). The Temple families and the courts enforced a flow of money and goods upwards towards the religious elite, primarily through taxes, land confiscations, and debts. Collection of debts was attended to with enthusiasm by authorities interested in increasing landholdings and expanding large estates, with the result that independent farmers became tenants or even slaves, while even traditional village lands would be sold off, as the conflation of sin and debt legitimated takeovers by the religious powers. So while the Roman ‘benefactors’ mined the province, the local authorities also enriched themselves, and could provide benefactions in their turn.

Thus the ordinary people in Israel welcomed the advent of a new dispensation, in the form of a Kingdom of God that was announced at last to have arrived. The people in the house of the chief tax collector Zacchaeus expect that the kingdom of God will appear at once (Luke 19:11) because they have seen the repentance of a rich man who (as typical for Luke) is also a sinner: for a financial sinner to repent and make restitution is a

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121 Fenn, *Death of Herod*, 39.
122 Joseph. BJ 7.218.
123 Material in this paragraph from Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, 146, 152.
miracle. Only in the Kingdom of God could this happen, they think. Jesus then warns them through the parable of the pounds, that “to all those who have, more will be given, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away” (Luke 19:26 NRSV). This is a more accurate depiction of the reality of the Roman Empire.

It is clear from Saller’s above description of *gratia* that a return is expected to come from one’s own free will at a time not specified and in a manner not quantified, even in the model of generalised, household, or ingroup reciprocity. Here the studies of Mauss into the nature of the gift come into play. Mauss refers to “the atmosphere of the gift” as a site of morality “where obligation and liberty intermingle.” He points to the inferiority of charity, the unreturned gift that causes inferiority, the striving of morality “to do away with the unconscious and injurious patronage of the rich almsgiver.” “To give is to show one’s superiority, to be sure, to be higher in rank, *magister*. To accept without giving in return, or without giving more back, is to become client and servant, to become small, to fall lower (*minister*).” This is the problem with benefaction.

Position in the Kingdom of God does not depend on prestige or “constant recognition of status,” which was just as important in religious communities such as Qumran (or writ large in the Jerusalem Temple) as it was in politics or daily life. The need to impress honour on others is the main driver of benefaction. At Luke 11:43 Jesus condemns the Pharisees for seeking the best seats in the synagogues and looking to be honoured in the public streets. If we recall that all goods were believed to be in fixed supply, so that what one gains another necessarily loses, the behaviour of such a figure as the rich ‘ruler’ (Luke 18:23-24) who seems unable to face the shame of selling his family’s wealth (which must consist, first, of inherited land) becomes clearer as does the drastic

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demand that Jesus is making. Jesus himself recognises the difficulty: “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God” (Luke 18:24 NRSV). (The word translated ‘ruler’ in the NRSV is ἀρχων, a Hellenistic designation for a magistrate or in Roman terms, decurion, whose responsibilities in a local city or area depend upon a basic land and money entrance requirement: so here I see that Jesus asks him and his extended family to give up not only wealth and the comforts of security and luxury that wealth brings, but also his position of power, respect and control within the local district.)

It is just such persons as the decurion who will be most likely to practice benefaction at the local level, and his wealth has legitimated his authority.

Wealth or riches does not refer to money primarily as it would in today’s world. The basic measure of worth was land. Wealth and power follow land, because the produce of the land creates both riches and honour. Poverty in first-century Israel was not mainly an economic idea: as Malina has it, poverty “refers to the inadequacy of life without honor and the consequent social and personal inability to participate in the activities of the community, the inability to retain self-respect” in view of the disrespect of others. Jesus represents the Kingdom of God as a space in which people are not divided into high and low status, but the poor are promised “they will no longer be treated as inferior but will receive full recognition as human beings.”

There is thus in the Kingdom of God no need for shame. What is legitimated in the Kingdom of God is the full humanity of the lowly.

Shame is inhumane. At its extreme shame “was a feeling of insufficiency or incompetence that could not be rectified.” It might be accompanied by a sense of “inexpiable guilt” due to something done or not done: to lose the family lands, one’s

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129 Malina, Social Gospel of Jesus, 111.
130 Nolan, Jesus Before Christianity, 71.
131 Carlin A. Barton, Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 244.
patrimony and the inheritance of one’s descendants, for example, would provide real
guilt along with real shame. As Mauss’ theory on the gift asserts, shame could be the
result of “gifts or benefits that constrained one until they were requited.” Thus
benefaction itself could shame the recipients and provoke the sense of inferiority the
Romans valued in subject peoples. And shame, in collectivist cultures, is externally
applied. Through the gaze of contempt or the refusal to see, the outspoken remark or the
refusal to greet, the mockery, the joke, the bullying, the civil death, shame followed
persons or families everywhere. Shame could result from relationships, the disgrace of
one becoming the shame of relatives and friends, and in prominently reported cases the
only escape from shame might be suicide.

A world without shame, therefore, would be a miraculous world. As we have
seen, all goods were believed to be in limited supply, and honour, the chief good, was
most limited. In the agrarian society of first-century Israel, patrons were necessary to the
ordinary person who without help would have limited access to needs, including the need
to pay debts and taxes that could save a family from dishonour and ruin. But the
“aristocratic elites” brought about distress in the population due to their “unwillingness
… to function as patrons for their fellow Israelites … in favour of expanding their own
elite standing.” Thus the Kingdom of God presented a divine Patron for Israel, one
who could supply the needs even of sinners without the exorbitant exactions of the
Temple establishment. Jesus’ prophetic action in the Temple, driving out the merchants
with the accusation “My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of
robbers” (Luke 19:45 NRSV), refers to the primacy of money in the lives of the elites, as
they fulfilled their own greed rather than God’s requirements of justice and mercy.

Benefaction, which was, in the Roman Empire, a means of obtaining honour

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132 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 246.
133 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 209.
from the dishonoured, would not be necessary in the Kingdom of God because there will be no rich to endow benefaction (Luke 6:20-26). Indeed, the Kingdom of God would be comprised of the poor and the only way the rich could get into the kingdom would be by becoming poor (Luke 12:33-34; 14:33).

A “kingdom divided against itself” (Luke 11:17) is now exposed by one who declares that “the kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11:20). Since the death of Herod the Great, there was no king in Israel. The Romans had divided the country among three of his sons who survived Herod’s executions among his heirs. Further, the elites were “still the parvenus that they had been when first installed by Herod to take the place of notables whom he had murdered.”  

It is a distinct case of divided inheritance with dubious consequences. Jesus’ status as ‘Son of David’ declares him to be the real ruler, and not, like Herod, a mere Roman client (Luke 18:38). Since the question we are examining is about legitimate rule, should a property be run by one person, or can there be clear lines of authority when the land is divided, as Israel was divided under Roman fiat?

According to Horsley, “Jesus was addressing the malaise of village communities disintegrating from the impact of Roman and Herodian conquest and exploitation.”

The families who formerly held respect in the country districts had been replaced by money lovers from no known background, and the old family shrines and tombs were perhaps removed: Herod built the city of Tiberias over an ancient cemetery. No clearer depiction of the danger to Israel’s sacred lands could be than this: sin, in the hands of foreigners or illegitimate kings, threatened even the fertility of the fields, for the reign of

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136 Fenn, *Death of Herod*, 18.
the proper king ensured God’s favour and the land’s prosperity. This is the ancient understanding of legitimate rule.

The hope and desire of the crowds following Jesus, then, was for a restoration both spiritual and historical, “despite the succession of many generations,” of a social and political sacred governance believed to have existed more purely in the past. Thus the Kingdom of God is neither entirely political nor entirely spiritual. Justice, peace, and righteousness are expected to come about not by benefactions of the rich, but in another way entirely, through the favour of the poor to one another. As we have seen, benefaction expected the return of public acclaim and thanksgiving, which had great force in the collectivist honour/shame cultures of the first-century Mediterranean world. The gift of benefaction, therefore, was returned in a form of value higher than money: the honour and glory that Ignatius Loyola, writing in the 16th century, could still claim was Satan’s first approach to the temptation of souls. And I have shown how the money expended on benefaction was first acquired by taxation, corruption, and confiscation, from a population ground down by the exactions of local landowners, Herodian parvenus, and Roman military governance. The Kingdom of God that Jesus announced, therefore, is therefore a spiritual transformation which leads to an expectation of justice for all, and this can only be realised in the absence of the rich (Luke 18:24).

In summary, benefaction was used in first-century Israel in an attempt to legitimate the impure line of descent of Herodian rulers. The Jerusalem Temple establishment was run by those of the high priestly families who were acceptable to the

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138 Material in this paragraph from Fenn, Death of Herod: money lovers, 16; Tiberias, 41; fertility, 29.
139 Fenn, Death of Herod, 177.
140 David L. Fleming, Draw Me into Your Friendship: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading of The Spiritual Exercises (Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 112. Annotation 142. “… first to tempt with a longing for riches — as he is accustomed to do in most cases — that men may more easily come to vain honor of the world, and then to vast pride. So that the first step shall be that of riches; the second, that of honor; the third, that of pride …”
Romans: it swallowed resources and collected taxes. The elites in Israel consulted their
greed more than the justice promoted by Jewish prophets, including Jesus. Benefaction
publicised the glory of the Roman Emperor and was used to normalise Roman
occupation of the sacred lands of Israel. In reaction, Luke’s gospel demonstrates the
programme for the Kingdom of God, a legitimate rule promised by Jesus, the legitimate
king, who reverses all the expectations and values of the existing social processes.
CHAPTER TWO: RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS

We would expect an honourable king to have honourable ministers. The Latin word *minister* refers to lesser persons, such as attendants (Luke 21:27), servants (Luke 17:10), and assistants (Luke 12:41-42), and, as Mauss indicates, benefaction creates persons who are *minister* to the benefactors.¹ All these roles are subordinate, in the analogy of a kingdom, to the king himself. When Luke’s Jesus sends out the seventy to announce that the Kingdom of God is near, those whom he sends are in the role of ministers: he has sent them before him because he plans to visit these places himself (Luke 10:1; 9). We have seen how earthly kings used benefaction to appear to be generous and benevolent while acting corruptly and oppressively. Their dishonesty was evident to all. To have an untainted kingdom, especially one as widely publicised as the Kingdom of God, the ministers or assistants should be honourable. Yet in Luke’s Gospel, the honour of Jesus’ disciples has been called into question by the action of Judas, one of the inner circle who has become possessed by Satan (Luke 22:3).

In this chapter I will introduce Luke’s Satan and query his operations in regard to Jesus and the Kingdom of God. To do this I must describe the ancient belief in spirit possession and the vulnerability of individuals to being taken over by gods, demons, and spirits whether good or evil, and what makes such persons open to possession. We shall see that shame is a tool used by Satan in his testing of the disciples as well as their master. The personal and political situation of Luke’s Judas will be explored, through the complementary worlds of *οἶκία* and *πόλις* which each command loyalty to such an extent that a conflict between their demands can lead to tragedy.²

² Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 98. Greek drama “sought to encapsulate the dilemmas of individuals in extreme circumstances, most notably when duties to family or community came into conflict with one another.” Greek plays were
Satan by the time of the Second Temple had become an apocalyptic figure in “a cosmic war between Good and Evil” which reflected, according to Neyrey, “an experience of crisis, disaster, and injustice in the lives of people who claim faithfulness to God, but who experience war, not peace.” The personalities of angels and evil spirits had developed into elaborate cosmology and demonology as “the popular religion of the Israelites came to find literary expression” in the period between the Babylonian Captivity and the first century CE. However, the prevailing understanding in the Gospels is that “suffering, misfortune, and even death are caused by Evil Powers.” So according to Luke the death of Jesus, the great King and Saviour, must be ‘caused’ by the greatest of the evil powers, Satan, even though Jesus was “handed over … according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 1:23), and this would seem to indicate that Satan is not a completely independent power.

Already at Jesus’ Temptation (Luke 4:1-13) Satan has presented himself as Jesus’ opponent for the purpose of testing him (Luke 4:13). The testing ritual has an explicit task of creating (or proving) a prophet or holy person. At his Baptism (Luke 3:21-22) Jesus had received a new status, responsibility, and honour standing. But such an empowerment requires a ritual to establish it. In ancient Israel, a person designated as a prophet had undergone a change, and in the case of Jesus, Satan is the spirit that confirms (through testing) the prophetic transformation.

Bell notes that analyses of ritual have cultural biases that “indicate, therefore, some of the way in which we who are asking the questions tend to construe the world,

widely known, admired, and performed in the first century CE. For conflict between family and state, see the Antigone of Sophocles.

5 Neyrey, Paul, In Other Words, 169.
human behaviour, meaning, and the tasks of explanation.” She notes that rituals deal with “paradigmatic values of death and rebirth”, community structures, “social transformation” and “embodying symbolic values” among other properties. The meaning of ritual in a literary document such as Luke-Acts could be read in many ways, but within the text’s own culture, I argue, a performance-based theory might be appropriate, where the performance of the event “is seen to have brought about certain shifts and changes, constructing a new situation and a new reality.” Satan’s performance of the tests in Luke’s version of the Temptation is thus the event that confirms the new reality.

The ritual of establishing a holy person in ancient Israel follows the pattern of initiation rituals in many cultures. There are typically the following distinct stages: separation, liminality, ritual confrontation, aggregation or return to the community with a new status. McVann notes, however, that holy persons who have been “initiated into particular roles such as shamans, prophets, or priests” are only partially reabsorbed into their community: “they remain partially on its margins since they are thought to retain access to powers or forces which make them dangerous” and their status divides them from the secular. Note that prophecy gives rise to volatile reactions in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 4:24; 29).

At Jesus’ Temptation we see the steps clearly taking place. At Luke 4:1 Jesus is separated by the Holy Spirit and taken into the wilderness where he is away from familiar places and other people. He is separated in this way for forty days, and Luke says Jesus does not eat (earthly food) during this time (Luke 4:2). So he is separated “in three ways: separation of people, place, and time.” The separation of place includes a wilderness or

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7 Material in this paragraph from Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 89.
8 e.g. Turner, Goffman, Bateson, Bell, *Ritual*, 73-75.
10 Material in this paragraph from McVann, “Rituals”: separation, 338; liminality, 339-340.
desert experience that is as different as possible from day to day life, hard to reach, set
apart for encounters with deities and spirits. It becomes a sacred space for the enactment
of the ritual. The period of liminality is a time of testing where the old identity has been
abandoned and the new identity not yet confirmed. Persons are subjected to “powerful
forces” that are “unleashed with the express purpose of shaping, even infusing, the
identity proper to the station in life they will assume at the conclusion of the ritual.”

The ritual conflict with the devil falls into the typical challenge-riposte pattern of
Mediterranean agonistic culture: “there is a controlled and highly focused expression of
hostility and tension such as occurs in a challenge-riposte situation.”11 The purpose of
the challenge is to determine whether the initiand possesses the required skills or whether
he or she possesses the absolute loyalty that is essential, and this is “especially true of
rituals which effect the rite of passage of a warrior or prophet.”12 The questions and
answers exchanged between Jesus and Satan in Luke 4:3-12 are expressed in the
traditional challenge-riposte form that Jesus will be called upon to use continually with
Pharisees and other opponents in his public ministry.

The challenge may be any act or word that might call into question a person’s
honour: honour must be defended in the public setting immediately, by an equal or
better response which then challenges the honour of the other party. The challenge need
not be an insult, question, dare or other hostile approach; a compliment or a gift is also a
challenge that must receive an honour-defending reply. For example, at Luke 18:18 a
‘ruler’ asks Jesus: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” and this
compliment is a challenge, which Jesus parries immediately with: “Why do you call me
good? No one is good but God alone” (Luke 18:18-19 NRSV). This challenge can be
interpreted as an attempt to catch out Jesus in disloyalty to God, his Father and master:
loyalty and obedience are supremely honourable. The exchange continues in challenge-

riposte form through the rest of Luke 18:18-30. Because loyalty is so honourable, Judas’
disloyalty at Luke 22:47-48 will be seen as superlatively dishonourable.13

The devil testing Jesus with these challenge-riposte questions “is associated with
bringing people to ruin”; he thus represents “a threat to God’s people and a testing of
their fidelity to God.”14 Satan is also “lord of another realm” which “creates an image of
two territories, or realms, each under a ruler, Satan or God.”15 Jesus’ ability to know and
quote scripture is an essential skill that shows that he is “schooled in God’s word,
knowledge of which is essential for a prophet.”16 McVann notes that Jesus during his
Temptation offers no resistance to the devil’s taunting him and physically moving him
around; Jesus does not attempt to escape or overcome the devil, and he makes no
objection to being subjected to the tests. This is the liminal stage of initiation, where
Jesus submits during the initiation to treatment that would be considered shameful in
other circumstances. In this situation the test is under the aegis of the Spirit of God that
sent him into the wilderness to undergo it (Luke 4:1). Obedience is honourable. The
aggregation or reintegration phase is demonstrated at Luke 4:14-15 when Jesus returns
with “the power of the Spirit” and is publicly recognised (“a report about him spread
through all the surrounding country”) and he was “praised by everyone” (Luke 4:14-15
NRSV). His new status is now established, and in future engagements he will control and
overcome the devil and his works.

Marshall confirms that the verb πειράζω “is used to express the experience of
Jesus” and is used in the Septuagint both of God testing the people for their “faith and
obedience” and of the people testing God “because they doubt his goodness and
power”; for Luke-Acts, however, Marshall says that “the mention of leading by the Spirit

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13 Material in this paragraph from Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the
14 Material in this paragraph from McVann, “Rituals”, 346.
15 Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, KY:
16 Material in this paragraph from McVann, “Rituals”: knowledge, 347; liminal, 352; status, 355.
shows that the devil’s role falls within the purpose of God,” an important point (Luke 4:1). Byrne notes that in the gospels, “for all his evil intent, Satan cannot escape being in some sense the instrument of God.” And Green says that Satan, as a “key player” in the “opposition against God’s purpose,” enters Judas at 22:3 to be able to “attack Jesus from within the inner circle of Jesus’ followers.”

The language of the devil’s questions points to the links connecting “Satan, the Roman vassal king Herod, and the religious elite” who in Luke-Acts oppose the Plan of God for the world’s salvation through Jesus. “The practice that was associated with house and household was appropriation and the use of space” as Moxnes has it, and the “practice associated with kingdom was domination and control of space”: a definition of ancient Mediterranean politics. Note that benefaction and the building of public monuments control public space. The kingdoms of the empire were displayed in Roman imperial propaganda as being in “their ideal, natural place in the social order” when placed under Rome or Rome’s client-kings, such as Herod. Scott introduces the idea that while “rituals of subordination are not convincing in the sense of gaining the consent of subordinates to the terms of their subordination” they do demonstrate that “a given system of domination is stable, effective, and here to stay.” Jesus is empowered to confront the ‘kingdoms’ with the Kingdom of God.

At the end of the testing in the wilderness, the devil departs from Jesus ἀχρι καιροῦ “until an opportune time” (Luke 4:13 NRSV). Jesus has now been legitimated as

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18 Brendan Byrne, *Lifting the Burden: Reading Matthew’s Gospel in the Church Today* (Strathfield, NSW: St. Paul’s, 2004), 42.
21 Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 133.
the prophet of the Kingdom of God, and he has specifically rejected the kingdoms of this world with their glory and authority (Luke 4:5-6). Liddell and Scott give meanings where καιρός is employed of time that include ‘the right point of time’, ‘the proper time or season of action’ and ‘the exact or critical time.’ This opens the possibility that Satan has chosen to possess Judas (Luke 22:3) at a precise and critical point in time.

Judas the Possessed

In this section the role of Judas in Luke is introduced and his connection to Satan (Luke 22:3) and the powers of this world is also examined. As we have seen, in the Roman Empire of the first century it is the powers of this world that carry out benefaction for their own purposes, not necessarily as a response to human need. The legitimate rule of Jesus over the demons, Satan’s minions, has already been established (Luke 11:20), but the loyalty of Jesus’ followers is still a point of attack for the powers of evil (Luke 22:31), and Judas will provide Satan’s opportunity.

Luke’s Judas is one who has fallen under the influence of Satan and who acts in darkness. Marshall notes that by naming Satan at 22:31 Luke “shows how more than human decisions were involved in the passion of Jesus” and this is because “the early church could see no other explanation of what had happened.” Note that other gospels differ from Luke regarding the impulse for Judas’ actions. At Luke 22:31-32 Satan aims to harm Jesus by attacking Peter and so isolating Jesus “from his closest followers, and thereby making his ruin that much easier.” And at the time of his arrest in Jerusalem,

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Jesus declares that it is the hour of the Temple authorities and “the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53 NRSV). It is the apparent disloyalty of the Satan-possessed Judas that allows the authorities of the corrupted Temple and ultimately the Roman Emperor to condemn the legitimate authority of the Kingdom of God (Luke 23:3-4).

Who was Judas Iscariot? In Luke-Acts, he is one “numbered among us” (Acts 1:17 NRSV) in a “position of overseer” (Acts 1:20 NRSV). (Note that Jesus’ instruction “not so with you” is to the leaders of his disciples at Luke 22:26 [NRSV]). He was one of the Twelve; hence it was necessary to replace him (Acts 1:21). He was an intimate insider, as shown by his behaviour at Jesus’ arrest: “He approached Jesus to kiss him” (Luke 22:47 NRSV) but Jesus queried his right to do so: “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” (Luke 22:48 NRSV). The word translated ‘betraying’ is παραδίδως meaning ‘handing over’ or ‘surrendering’ or ‘giving into another’s hands’ (as a conquered city, or hostage) but may also have connotations of ‘gift’ purely: παραδίδωμι may mean to ‘offer’ or ‘bestow’ and so we see that Judas’ transaction with the Temple authorities at Luke 22:4-6 has elements of gift reciprocity in it: Judas will give over his master, and in return the Temple authorities ‘offer’ to give Judas money (Luke 22:3-6). The word translated ‘offer’ by the NRSV is συνέθεντο from συντίθημι whose first meaning is ‘to place together’, so Judas and the Temple officers put their heads together and come to a ‘mutual understanding’ that for the gift of his master Judas receives a gift of money. This is obviously a highly dishonourable gift transaction.

For Luke Judas acts under the domination of Satan: that is, in a state of possession by the evil spirit. Keener notes that “the entrance of spirits into individuals to empower them for a task, good or evil was already familiar in the Mediterranean

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Danker says that at Luke 4:29-30 the people of Nazareth “threaten what Satan specifically succeeds in achieving after finding an ally in Judas (22:3) and in Jerusalem’s religious establishment (v. 53).” Judas’ situation is thus directly related to Jesus’ experiences during his temptation (Luke 4:1-13). St. Ignatius Loyola, in the Spiritual Exercises, says that the devil tempts “first with a longing for riches” and the manuscript has added in Ignatius’ own handwriting “as he is accustomed to do in most cases”: this is so that “men may more easily come to vain honor of the world, and then to vast pride.”

If we apply the same understanding to Judas, then the money paid to him acquires a diabolical meaning, because the emphasis on honour was as alive in Loyola’s day as it was in the ancient Mediterranean world. What counts in ancient Mediterranean culture is not one’s interior motivation but one’s outward behaviour as judged, weighed and assessed by other people. In ancient religious thought, guilt has an objective nature, and so Byrne notes that where “innocent blood is shed the guilt must fall somewhere.” Payment has been used to legitimate the transaction. Accepting the money is outward behaviour, and it carries with it both guilt and dishonour. The possibility that Judas’ ‘heart’ was corrupted by desire for money would align him with Jesus’ opponents the Pharisees (Luke 16:14). This points to an attraction to the kind of honour produced by benefaction and an obvious acknowledgement of the Temple as the legitimate authority, rather than the Kingdom of God.

Fitzmyer finds that although Luke does not name Judas at 22:21-23 “he implies that Judas has shared in the Last Supper” and that “the betrayal will come from one from whom he had expected the utmost loyalty.” Only Luke 6:16 uses ‘ betrayer’ or ‘traitor’

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31 David L. Fleming, Draw Me into Your Friendship: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading of The Spiritual Exercises (Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 112.
32 Byrne, Lifting the Burden, 201.
προδότης for Judas: Liddell and Scott report a variant use of the word in Aeschylus as ‘one who abandons in danger.’

Both Luke (22:3) and John (13:27) agree that Satan is the cause of Judas’ behaviour. Johnson believes that Jesus’ words at 22:21 “need not even require Judas’ physical presence” because of the “biblical sense” of the word χείρ as meaning ‘power’ and this means only that “the fact of the betrayal overshadows the meal.”

Hence it is the hand of Satan upon the table, rather than that of Judas. Contra Johnson, I think the hand of Judas is certainly present: as Green points out, “it is simply stunning that the inner circle of Jesus’ followers, those who constitute the kin group with whom he has chosen to share Passover, includes a betrayer.”

But it is the hand of a possessed individual. Byrne refers to Judas as “an agent of Satan.” Green identifies Judas with Jesus’ long-term opponents, but states that even while “under the influence of Satan, Judas is culpable for his actions.”

He is surely culpable in the sense of objective guilt, not necessarily, in Luke, through his own intention. According to the “structural analogy” of Hollenbach, exploitation, colonial oppression, and the weakening of ancestral traditions led to a ferment of revolt in the Jewish War (66-70 CE) and in this context of domination, “demon possession is frequent” as a symptom or, I suggest, as a symbol of social unrest.

The conflict of authorities is overwhelming in first-century Jerusalem, and the possession of Judas is a depiction of this reality.

Peter in Acts proclaims that Jesus brought liberation and healing to “all who were oppressed by the devil” (Acts 10:38). Liberation and healing are the actions of the legitimate ruler of the Kingdom of God. Darkness and Satan are identified at Luke 22:53, and a turning to light represents a turning to God at Acts 22:6. Pelikan points out that

“the actors in the drama of the crucifixion, even Judas Iscariot” (Acts 1:16-20), as well as Pontius Pilate (Acts 25:11) and even Jesus himself must be seen in the light of the “definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).41

Malina and Rohrbaugh, in describing the question of identity, say this: “In antiquity, the question was not the modern one about the identity of an individual. It was always the question about the position and power that derived from an ascribed or acquired honor status.” 42 Hence Jesus asks the question: “Who do the crowd say that I am?” (Luke 9:18 NRSV). Here he asks about his “public self” and at Luke 9:20 he asks “who do you say that I am?” (Luke 9:20 NRSV). His public reputation should align with the perception of his status within his own group for the honour standings to match. Identity is something that is acknowledged by “significant others” in collectivist cultures. Because in Jewish tradition, the lack of Israelite kings and the presence of foreign domination (Hellenistic rulers and Roman overlords) had led to what Aune calls “idealisation” of a future, eschatological king, the Gospels seek to confirm and show “the supreme significance of the identity of Jesus conceptualized in terms of various types of eschatological deliverers.”43 Peter’s view that Jesus is the Messiah (Luke 9:20) emphasises the conflict of authorities between secular and sacred rule, and that is what places Judas (and the early church) “into the context of world history.”44

Another factor is love, defined at the time of the New Testament as attachment or loyalty, both to ingroups and individuals. It is not necessarily an emotional state, but is expressed through outward behaviour. Thus children love parents when they obey them; people love God when they keep God’s commandments (Ps 119:127), and Jesus when they keep Jesus’ commandments (John 15:10); slaves are expected to love their masters

42 Material in this paragraph from Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels, 264.
by carrying out even their unspoken commands.\textsuperscript{45} By this criterion Judas has certainly ceased to love his master. One would expect in the first-century Mediterranean world to love one’s legitimate superiors, firstly and especially one’s parents, and Jesus stands in the relationship of \textit{paterfamilias} to his group. This lack of love and loyalty is therefore shameful in Judas and dishonourable for all the disciples, whose responsibility, as we have seen, is to keep one another in loyalty and love.\textsuperscript{46}

What does Judas do with the money he is given to lead the arrest party? He uses it to buy a field; he acquires land. Johnson finds that the imagery of Acts 1:18 “suggests something more of a farm or country estate with buildings on it” because of the idea of a “dwelling-place” (Acts 1:20): Johnson also points out that “we are to think of him falling from a height, perhaps from a building” that would be found on a farm.\textsuperscript{47} Becoming a landowner is always honourable, and this is land of Israel, so therefore it is also sacred. The name “field of blood” came to this estate because the fact that Judas had spilled his dying blood upon it “became known to all those living in Jerusalem” (Acts 1:19).\textsuperscript{48} The field then becomes “deserted” with “no one living on it” (Acts 1:20), because according to the collectivist culture, the public reputation of the land is now tarnished.\textsuperscript{49} As Johnson observes, Judas “is the evildoer but it is the property that is cursed!”\textsuperscript{50}

The property, with a reflection back to Luke 16:9 and its reference to “mammon” of wrongdoing (\textit{a0dikía}) or money unjustly come by, is bought with “hire of ill-doing” (Acts 1:18: my translation). Spencer notes that the same word, \textit{tópos}, used to describe Judas’ honourable “place” among the Twelve, describes his tragedy that led him to turn aside

\textsuperscript{46} John 13:34 expresses this expectation explicitly.
\textsuperscript{49} See Columella \textit{Rust.} 1.7.6-7.
\textsuperscript{50} Johnson, \textit{Acts}, 36.
“to go to his own place” (Acts 1:25), which Spencer sees as “a desolate, accursed spot where no one can survive.”\(^{51}\) So as riches lead to honour, Judas in attempting to get honour instead in Luke-Acts gets dishonour and death.

In summary, the open departure of Judas for the opposite camp, that of the Temple and hence the Herods and Pilate’s Roman governance, is dishonourable not only to himself but to all the disciples, since, as we have seen, the members of the ingroup are all responsible for one another’s actions. Judas’ defection happens in view of all the arresting party and it does not take long for the news to reach the rest of Jerusalem (Luke 22:56). The authorities do not attempt to conceal what they are doing; they only want to prevent the crowds who honour Jesus from stopping them doing it (Luke 22:2). The result would be to call into question Jesus’ legitimacy in respect of the Kingdom of God.

The early church will have had difficulty in explaining not only how Judas came to do something so dishonourable as turn his master in, but also how Jesus, possessed of divine authority and understanding, could have had someone capable of this deed as a disciple in the first place. Luke’s Judas, although identified from the beginning in the narrative as the one “who became a traitor” (Luke 6:16 NRSV), must have travelled with the disciples to all appearances as one of them until the moment he changed direction and went to the Temple authorities. We will now consider the phenomenon of spirit possession and examine Judas’ deeds in the light of firstly, accusations of deviance in ancient culture, secondly, involvement of supernatural forces in everyday life, and thirdly, possession trance as a reaction to overwhelming conflict between cultural worlds.

In collectivist cultures, the ideal for group mentality is for all group members to think alike. Both judgement concerning and orientation towards people, events and situations outside the group are shared by all group members, and would be typically

cautious if not hostile. By going to authorities outside the Jesus group in a Jerusalem under Roman governance, Judas therefore exhibits behaviour that today we call ‘deviant’. Explanations for such behaviour in the first-century Mediterranean world are different to those we employ today, because there was no concept of impersonal causation at the time. In other words, everything is caused by a person, whether mortal, divine, or demonic: hence the widespread and powerful belief in the evil eye. That which is not caused by obedience to legitimate authority may then be thought to be caused by demons or evil forces.

Deviance, for Pful and Henry, is “a matter of interpretative judgement occurring in an established historical, cultural, and situational context.” Accusations of deviance (behaviour outside social norms) were “typical of Mediterranean social conflict and frequent in the Gospels” and were most seriously damaging to reputation and honour when they involved “accusations of sorcery” or demon possession. First-century Mediterranean cultures were strongly reliant on stereotypes as a means of locating persons and groups, and the stereotypes were based on kinship, age, gender and place of birth or dwelling: a person was identified with the groups to which he or she belonged. When someone began to act in a way that was different to the prior and perceived status for that person’s social position, he or she was believed to be controlled by outside forces. Judas abandons his former behaviour as one of the twelve, and becomes an informer and cat’s-paw of the Jerusalem authorities: the best explanation according to Luke’s understanding is that he is possessed by an evil force. It is Satan, the spirit of evil, who has it in mind to discredit the legitimate ruler of the Kingdom of God.

Neyrey notes that first-century beliefs saw the world containing “a dominant evil force who is perceived anthropomorphically,” a “personal Evil” that “attacks and seduces people”: his description of a culture that thinks in this way is as a “witchcraft society.”58 Using anthropological models, Neyrey points out that a witch (or evil-possessed individual) is defined “in terms of the misfortune such a person is said to have caused and the context in which such misfortune appears” and more specifically, the context includes a worldview of cosmic warfare between good and evil. In the confrontational agonistic society of first-century Palestine, including conflicts both religious and political (and the two are intertwined), the accusation of spirit possession serves as a way of strengthening the ingroup by revealing the danger within, so “the threat to the group’s boundaries is revealed, and its cause, the witch, is identified and can be expelled.” At Acts 1:25 we see the result of this expulsion or separation process, with the appointing of a new man to replace Judas among the Twelve.59

Before the third century CE ancient Mediterranean people saw little division between secular and spiritual realms. “God and God’s angels, spirits, demons, genies, stars, and planets were all part of the total environment” and people took these entities into account and sought evidence of their intervention in their lives.60 Spirits could be good as well as evil, but were always powerful: God caused a spirit to sweep over the waters at Creation (Gen 1:2); God’s spirit overshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary so that her child would be “holy; he will be called Son of God” (Luke 1:35 NRSV); the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his Baptism accompanied by a spiritual voice giving him the honour and status of God’s Beloved Son (Luke 3:22). DeMaris notes that in a stratified society, it is common to find “possession trance as its institutionalized altered

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58 Material in this paragraph from Neyrey, Paul, In Other Words: personal Evil; witchcraft society, 197-198; cosmic warfare, 185; expelled, 186.
59 At Acts 1:25 it appears that Judas expels himself.
state of consciousness,” and while in the New Testament “trance and possession trance coexist” nevertheless “possession trance in such forms as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and demonic possession dominate the narrative world of the Gospels and Acts.”

In the 2010 Oberammergau Passionsspiele Judas is made to say, “Satan, you have made me blind and deaf. You tempted me to do this deed and dragged me into the abyss.” Blindness and deafness are characteristic of the personal situation of someone who is spirit possessed, especially by an evil spirit. Mediterranean persons “shared their world with invisible beings, largely more powerful than themselves, to whom they had to relate,” says Brown. Aune explains that “in possession trance it is believed that an external supernatural being or power has taken control of a person.” In antiquity there was no understanding of impersonal causation: everything resulted from a personal cause, whether visible or invisible. The question is always: “Who did this?” Satan intervenes directly in the narrative at the Temptation (under the name “devil”: Luke 4:2-13); and again when he possesses Peter, who is then in the company of his master, Jesus, who can control this most powerful spirit (Luke 4:8, 22:31-32); when he possesses Judas (Luke 22:3); and when, in Jesus’ vision, he falls from heaven (Luke 10:18).

Strelan points out that in antiquity, both Greco-Roman and Jewish sources portray their heroes as acting not by their own will but “under the direction — and therefore also the favour and blessing of — the gods.” The reason for such communication from the divine to the human realm is always, in Luke-Acts, to advance

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62 Oberammergau Passionsspiele 2010, Textbook (Gemeinde Oberammergau 2010), 80.
64 Aune, Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 86.
the plan of God (ἡ βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ). Luke’s concern is to “write the story of the continuation and fulfilment of God’s project” which has “the one aim” of bringing “salvation to all people.” And it is the legitimate ruler and authority of the Kingdom of God who is charged with this responsibility.

A great and holy person “has control over spirits and not vice versa” (Luke 4:39). It therefore follows that Judas, who has become possessed, lacks the qualities of a holy man. “In the encounter with spirits, the holy person can interact without fear of them possessing him” or her. This is seen in Jesus’ ability to drive out evil spirits. Peter also still lacks this power to resist evil spirits, as shown at Luke 4:8, where Jesus rebukes Satan in him, and at Luke 22:33 Satan is still trying to win the disciples. Such strength to resist uncontrolled possession belongs to a truly holy person, such as Jesus. Lewis points out that the diagnosis of spirit possession (“Satan entered into Judas”: Luke 22:3 NRSV) “is a cultural evaluation of a person’s condition, and means precisely what it says: an invasion of an individual by a spirit.” Since a holy person is under divine protection, he or she would not “fall victim to” the evil spirits. We see that this is so in the narrative of Jesus’ Temptation (Luke 4:2-13), the event that legitimates his prophetic power.

By my reading, the significance of Luke 10:18 is that Jesus has seen an event in the spiritual world that will impact on the temporal realm. Satan has fallen “like a flash of lightning” from heaven (spiritual) to earth (temporal) (Luke 10:19 NRSV). Humphrey interprets the rhetoric of Luke 10:17-20 as indicating that “the disciples rejoice that the demons have been subject to them in Jesus’ name; Jesus’ vision explains why this has happened” and as Jesus interprets the vision, he tells them “both what he has seen (the

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downfall of Satan) and what they have seen (the banishing of illness and evil).”\textsuperscript{72} However, Green states that what is seen in Jesus’ vision is a prophecy of “the future (and ultimate) downfall of Satan” at the time of judgement.\textsuperscript{73} Nevertheless, I think this fall is concerned with “control over space described as a kingdom,” as Moxnes points out: “Being possessed is an expression of the rule of demonic powers, of their control of an area” and they have now come from the spiritual region to intervene against humankind.\textsuperscript{74}

Furthermore, in the Roman colonial context, “imperial violence and the constant threat of more violence led to demonic possession” and in the absence of effective means of resistance, people became possessed by demons, a symbolic clash of kingdoms transmuted into social symptoms that Jesus addressed both by exorcisms and preaching.\textsuperscript{75} The group at Qumran believed “they were caught up in a world-historical struggle between maleficent superhuman spiritual forces, of Belial or Satan or the Prince of Darkness, on one side, and God and benign spiritual forces, on the other.”\textsuperscript{76} Horsley speaks of “Jesus’ exorcisms as a mode of resistance to imperial violence.”\textsuperscript{77} Exorcisms in the New Testament are spoken of “in terms of establishing a rule over an area and setting up a different kingdom.”\textsuperscript{78} That Kingdom of God is under the authority of the legitimate king, Jesus.

Jesus gives his authority at Luke 10:19, but follows it with a warning at Luke 10:20: “Do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you” (Luke 10:20 NRSV). Do not become overconfident; one of us may submit to the spirits. Only in the time of the Kingdom of God will the danger represented by demons and spirits be overcome (Luke

\textsuperscript{72} Edith M. Humphrey, \textit{And I Turned to See the Voice: the Rhetoric of Vision in the New Testament} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 111.
\textsuperscript{73} Green, \textit{Gospel of Luke}, 419.
\textsuperscript{74} Moxnes, \textit{Putting Jesus in His Place}, 134.
\textsuperscript{75} Horsley, “‘By the Finger of God,’” 57-58.
\textsuperscript{76} Horsley, “‘By the Finger of God,’” 58.
\textsuperscript{77} Horsley, “‘By the Finger of God,’” 64.
\textsuperscript{78} Moxnes, \textit{Putting Jesus in His Place}, 134.
Jesus speaks of the political situation in the Roman Empire at Luke 11:17: “Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house” and specifically names Satan as one “divided against himself” (Luke 11:17-18 NRSV). This is the spirit of division who challenges the legitimate reign of the Kingdom of God.

In summary, Satan, entrusted by God with the mission of temptation and testing of loyalties, has found out in Judas Iscariot a person open to spirit possession, whom he can use to attack the perception of Jesus as a holy prophet inspired by God, so shaming the entire Jesus group and casting the master’s reputation into doubt. We see that Luke finds Satan acting in the guise of Judas, and his purpose in despite of himself is to further the Plan of God. Satan also is aligned with the powers of this world, the important figures of Roman and Herodian rule, who are the main givers of benefaction in Palestine. A world still subject to the evil spirits has not yet attained to the Kingdom of God, so in Chapter Three, I will enquire how the Lukan Jesus directs that the new and promised kingdom may be ruled.

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CHAPTER THREE: CHILDHOOD AND SERVITUDE

In this chapter we examine the instructions the Lukan Jesus gives to the leaders of his group at Luke 22:26. Firstly, “the greatest among you must establish yourselves as the youngest,” and secondly, “the one presiding” must behave as “the one serving” (Luke 22:26: my translation). Jesus goes on to make an analogy between leadership and serving at an ancient banquet: “For who is greater, the one reclining or the one serving, is it not the one reclining? But I am among you as one serving” (Luke 22:27: my translation). Jesus places himself here as a waiter in the context of serving a meal. We will investigate the background of these instructions in three areas. We look first at the position of young people in ancient societies, the respect due to age, the importance of obedience from younger to older, and the relatively devalued and risky situation of children and youth. In the second place we introduce the ancient low opinion of work, especially manual work or personal service, the basics around a slave society such as the Roman Empire, and the expectations on serving persons whether bond or free. And thirdly, we will visit the ancient convivium, the roles of guest and host, and the role of the waiter on this field of honour competitions. All this is to examine what is meant by service as a means to legitimate the role of leaders in the ancient Mediterranean world.

The Obedient Childhood

Obedience, respect and attentiveness to elders are the ongoing requirements of children in antiquity. Colossians puts the tasks and expectations of children in one sentence: “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord” (Col 3:22 NRSV). This obedience is the fruit of discipline and instruction from the parents to the children (Eph 6:4). In this section I will lay out the general context of
childhood in the first-century Mediterranean world, including high child and infant mortality, the place of child slaves in a slave society, the frequent severity of educational methods, and the emphasis on parental control in collectivist cultures. I will examine the honour implications of ancestors (e.g. Abraham, Isaac), names (including such appellations as ‘Son of David’), and genealogies (Matt 1:1-18; Luke 3:23-38). I will then compare Judaic and Greco-Roman styles of upbringing, including the emphasis on Torah and Wisdom in the Jewish tradition (Luke 2:41-52). Wisdom, in Judaism, is a legitimating quality in rulers, and wisdom in Judaism is taught to children in the hopes that they will follow tradition and piety and become fit rulers in their own households as adults.¹

Matthew and Luke are the only canonical Gospels to have an infancy narrative. Ancient literature by and large prefers to deal with the deeds and fame of adults rather than the development of children, and this reflects the relatively devalued (slave-like) position of children.² Honouring of parents and elders was built into both Greco-Roman and Judaic thought and practice, and the chief desideratum for children was obedience.³ There was a distinct emphasis on honouring the past. One particular value of a child was as heir to the family’s material possessions, especially any lands, but also for such things as the family’s honourable reputation, as well as the responsibility to “keep alive the memory of individual members of the family” such as parents, aunts and uncles.⁴

Children were meant to serve parents’ needs and live up to expectations. Children took their value from their place in the family, which like the wider culture was backward-looking, orientated to ancestors and praying rather to live up to the honourable deeds of

¹ The wisdom of parents includes exercising discipline upon children (Prov 29:15).
these ancestors than to bring about any change directed to the future. The idea of the future was in any case severely curtailed. The future belongs to God, or the gods, and is not for humanity to know.

What was desired in a child was someone who could add to the honour of the household, whether through a significant marriage as in the case of girls, or through deeds of military or political importance in the case of boys. To join the Roman Army, for example, would be honourable for a boy from even a lesser background in the Roman Empire. The past was vitally important. The reputation of ancestors could even affect the outcome of legal proceedings. “Asinius Marcellus escaped scot-free in the forgery scandal of A.D. 61 because of the fame of his ancestors (he was great-grandson of Asinius Pollio) and the intervention of Nero.” This could work both ways, of course: it would not be a matter of indifference to Pilate that Jesus was hailed as son (descendant) of David (Matt 21:9). Upon hearing that a Messiah had been born (that is, a person of proper descent legitimately to assume both political and religious rule of his kingdom) Herod the Great, naturally, was “troubled, and all Jerusalem with him” (Matt 2:3 KJV). Legitimate rule comes through having the right ancestors, and Herod was lacking these.

Children lived in a dangerous situation in the Roman Empire. We begin with horrific child mortality in antiquity. Most child tombstones that have been found relate the deaths of children upwards of two years old, as infant mortality was so high. Older children might die when sent to work very early: a tombstone from Rome commemorates Florus, “a child driver of a two-horse chariot” who fell to his death while working.

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7 G. R. Watson, The Roman Soldier (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 37. Serving in the army was a privilege, and patronage would be desirable to join even the auxiliary (non-citizen) cohorts.
racing, while “Pieris, hairdresser, lived 9 years,” and her tombstone was dedicated by her mother, Hilara. Maternal mortality was around 50 percent, and many pitiful inscriptions record the deaths of young women in childbirth. This was not improved by the likelihood that the bride might be very young at the time of marriage: age eleven or twelve was common, with the groom more typically in the late twenties. Since wives were often children themselves childlike obedience was expected from them (Col 3:18), just as slaves were never counted as adults, but must demonstrate the same obedience (Col 3:22). The adult norm, against which both children and women were contrasted, was “the free male urban citizen” and children were seen as lacking “the physical strength and courage that are typical of men” and also the faculty of reason: Bakke points out that children’s inability “to communicate in an adult manner” placed them outside “the rational world of adults,” that is, the only real world of agency.

Child mortality, especially in the first few years of life, was in excess of 50 percent: 30 percent infant mortality with a further 30 percent of live births dead by age six. According to Garnsey, “many parents in antiquity followed child-rearing methods which undermined the health and survival prospects of their children,” including swaddling, the use of wet-nurses, improper weaning methods (too early, or too late), and weaning onto “nutritionally inadequate” foods. Childhood diseases that today are contained by vaccination carried off whole families of children in the ancient Mediterranean area through epidemics that were seen as the work of demons, evil spirits, angry deities, or the evil eye. The anxious father whose only daughter is dying at twelve

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15 Parkin and Pomeroy, *Roman Social History*, 44.
years old (the marriageable age), desperately calls on Jesus to save her at Luke 8:41-42.

Mortality is a threat to the family’s fabric, and Jesus here is the one with authority to call her spirit to return (Luke 8:55), and to obey him (8:54). The condition for saving her is the family’s belief in Jesus’ legitimate powers (Luke 8:50).

In addition, the death of young adults was very common: 75 percent of any generation (all the persons born at approximately the same time) would be dead by age twenty-five. Accidents, infectious disease, and violence accounted for many children and young adults: malaria alone killed up to half the population of Rome every summer until the day that Mussolini drained the swamps. Roman soldiers are recorded as possessing the symptoms of malaria, “and many historians believe that one of the main causes of the collapse of the Roman Empire may well have been the prevalence of malaria around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.” Plague was common. In addition to the possibility of actual famines, crops could fail and foodstuffs could turn to mould. And the exactions of landlords and government authorities would take parts of crops in kind. The result was doubtful nutrition and deficiency diseases affecting young and old alike. Since, as we have seen, disease and mortality were seen as the work of spirits and demons, such a healer as Jesus naturally attracted the question asked by John the Baptist: “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” (Luke 7:20 NRSV). Jesus’ reply (Luke 7:21-23) points to the deeds that legitimate his status.

Some children were better than others. The first-born son was a particularly valued child, because of “the ubiquitous biblical notion that the first is also the best.”

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19 Suet. Ner. 39.1; Plin. HN 26.3.
or ‘one of a kind’. In Judaism it is connected with ‘choseness’ and carries the idea of being dedicated to God. The closest relationship in the ancient Mediterranean world is between mother and son, followed by brother and sister: the father is a person to be revered and feared. The father is also the ultimate person to be honoured and obeyed. Soon after a child was born it was laid at its father’s feet: to accept the child, the father lifted it up “with a ritual gesture” and it became a member of the family. If it was not accepted, the baby might be directly killed but was more commonly exposed. There could be several reasons for exposure. Families might not be able to raise all their children, so a girl might be rejected to save the cost of a dowry, or a boy to prevent property being split up between heirs. In spite of a common belief that girls in particular were more likely to be exposed, along with disabled, illegitimate, or slave babies, Boswell finds that in “known historical instances” both males and females were exposed, and that the rich were more likely than the poor to reject their children because of inheritance considerations. At Exod 1:14 the male child Moses is exposed to prevent the danger of death from the Egyptian authorities! Certainly the man who was born blind at John 9:1 was raised by his parents in spite of his disability. Parents, particularly fathers, legitimately possessed the power of life and death over their children in the New Testament world.

Exposure might result in the child’s death but slave traders found much of their stock among exposed children. When we consider the position of slave children in a

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slave society, we note abuse in both Greco-Roman and Judaic practice. Jewish
regulations provided that girls might be sold as slaves only when under the age of twelve
and must be freed on reaching that age, and based on Exod 21:7, she might only be sold
into another Jewish family, not to gentiles.29 The expectation was that she would be used
sexually, either by the master or by his son.30 A significant number of children were
slaves who were reared in fear and dominated in every way. Although slaves could be
manumitted and become freed persons, the stigma of their slavery remained.31
Particularly for women it was “unthinkable” that a slave girl “should never have been
violated”: the presumption of having been raped put her on the same level as a
prostitute.32 The appropriate motivation for slave obedience was fear, and the marks of
the whip were the sign of the slave body.33 So respect, obedience and attentiveness to
master or mistress were a means of survival for slaves. Here we note similar requirements
for children and slaves in the ancient biblical world. So we see that a child’s importance
in the family was affected by the general background of high mortality, especially infant
mortality, but death was common at all ages. Whether the child will live or die, or live as
a person of an entirely different class (usually the slave class: Moses, of course, became a
prince) due to exposure, lay in the power of the father who could claim or reject the
child. All this is before the child had a chance to exhibit the desired qualities of respect,
obedience, and honouring of parents (Eph 6:2). These are the qualities the Lukan Jesus
will advise as the necessary demeanour of legitimate leaders in the Kingdom of God.

In antiquity, the honouring of parents began with the primary importance of
origins for both children and adults (Luke 3:31). Origins start with place: again, the land,

29 Mek. Ex. 21:7, 29a.7; 21.20, 30c.43.
30 Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions During the
31 Parkin and Pomeroy, Roman Social History, 193. Roman law provided for manumission with many
restrictions, including the proviso that slaves not be freed without due reason until the age of thirty.
32 Jeremias, Jerusalem, 336.
the city, the territory of the clan. Moxnes says a place or “spatial locality” is “imbued with meaning from history and tradition” and is “associated and identified with order and structure,” especially “social and community relations that are played out in that place.”

There were no nation-states as we see in the modern era, but there were nationalities, and hence ‘nations’. The word ‘nation’ derives from *natio*: birth, or the act of being born. Hence honour comes from following the traditions of the ancestors (Matt 15:2). These traditions are taught to children who are expected to follow without question. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees at Matt 15:4-6 for claiming that anyone who speaks against father or mother must surely die, yet taking money needed for parents’ support and so misusing the tradition. Respect, obedience, and attentiveness to the desires and needs of parents included responsibility for lifelong support of father and mother (John 19:26-27). Hence there can be no legitimate authority without appeal to tradition and the right ancestors.

The education of children in classical antiquity was typically under the hand of severe schoolmasters who might regularly beat their pupils. However, there was some debate about this, as physical punishment was considered particularly appropriate for slaves, not freeborn students. Quintilian also points to the problem of child sexual abuse, known at that time as it is today: “I will hesitate to mention the vile acts those unspeakable creatures use that power of beating to achieve and what opportunities this fear among the pitiful children also on numerous occasions offers to others.”

Nonetheless, some biblical texts encourage fathers to beat their children and other family members (Sir 3:6-7; Prov 3:11-12) because family honour must be upheld by every member of the family and, as we have already seen, “one member’s misbehaviour shames

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36 Quint *Inst*. 1.3. 14-17.
the entire group.” 37 It is dishonourable for the \textit{paterfamilias} to be unable to impose
discipline. Legitimate authority includes the authority to punish.

Education beyond the basic literacy and numeracy valuable to daily life would be
undertaken with specialised teachers in grammar and rhetoric. 38 Roetzel notes that such
education was expensive and denoted a privileged background. 39 Literacy was valued in
the Roman Empire: Vegetius advises recruitment of literate soldiers for the Roman army:
“Single out some of them on the basis of knowledge of the alphabet and their ability to
calculate and reckon.” 40 A boy recently recruited in Egypt writes to “his father and lord”:
“I ask you now, lord and father, to write me a letter … allowing me to do reverence to
your handwriting because you educated me well, and therefore I hope to advance
quickly” (in the Roman army). 41 The polite tone of this letter indicates a proper father-
son relationship of gratitude and reverence on the son’s part. Green tells us that the
“identification of Jesus with God’s purpose” in Luke is in tune with the ancient
Mediterranean expectations of sons. “These included the son’s obedience to his father,
the father’s role as primary educator of his son, and the son’s service as his father’s agent,
his surrogate.” 42

The great desideratum for Jewish children was knowledge of Torah and the
Jewish scriptures, and Jerusalem was the centre of such study. 43 Marshall reports that
“Rabbinic teaching made considerable use of questions on the part of the pupils, out of
which discussion could arise.” 44 At age twelve, Jesus is found sitting with the teachers
(Luke 22:46) in the Temple, as it was the normal practice for both teachers and students

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38 Lester L. Grabbe, \textit{Wisdom of Solomon} (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 31-32 cf. education of
Philo.
39 Material in this paragraph from Calvin J. Roetzel, \textit{The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context}, 3rd ed.
40 Veg \textit{Mil.} 1.2.6.
41 Shelton, \textit{As the Romans Did}, 259. B.G.U. \textit{Select Papyri} 112.
to be seated; the Paul of the narrative of Acts describes himself as seated “at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3 NRSV) to undertake his Jewish education. Jesus’ ability to answer intelligently and engage adroitly in debate with teachers is honourable to his family, and demonstrates the pious upbringing given him in the household of Joseph. Growth in wisdom, shown by both Jesus and John the Baptist, is the project for children in Jewish households, and Wisdom itself is a pedagogical topic in Jewish scriptures. Obedience and respect for both parents and teachers are emphasised in Jewish teaching; the penalties for lack of respect range through death to public disgrace and ruin (Deut 21:18; Prov 5:13-14).

Jesus’ statement “it is necessary for me to be (engaged) in the things of my father” (Luke 2:49: my translation) is sometimes translated “in my father’s house,” i.e. in a certain place (Luke 2:49 NRSV). Green states that a household is “not only a designation of place but also of authority” and the use of διέκοψε indicates divine compulsion. Note that this divine compulsion in the case of a child requires attendance in study with the teachers of wisdom. Green also indicates that Greco-Roman readers of ancient biography would expect a heroic Messianic character such as Jesus to demonstrate extraordinary ability in childhood, in this case wisdom and devotion to divine matters. Green’s position contra most other commentators is to see Jesus debating the teachers as an equal, rather than a student: this more adult role would be in keeping with Greco-Roman rather than Judaic expectations of the situation. That Jesus identifies his father with the house of wisdom rather than his natal home brings up a question about his upbringing: who is the parent who is to be obeyed? Luke emphasises that Jesus returns to Nazareth with his parents as an obedient son (honourable) and as he

“increased in wisdom and in years” he attained “divine and human favour” (Luke 2:51-52 NRSV). Age, not youth, is wise and favoured, in other words.

There is an emphasis on origins that underlies the honour of parents and this is demonstrated in both Matthew and Luke by the provision of genealogies. Whereas Mark treats the career of Jesus as the biography of an adult whose mighty deeds are the appropriate subject of commemoration, and John emphasises the divine action in bringing Jesus to earth, both Matthew and Luke site Jesus in the correct and honourable genealogical setting from the point of view of both oικία and πόλις: as son of David (Luke 18:38; 20:41) and Son of God, a title of the king (Luke 8:28; 22:70). ‘Son of God’ refers also, in Judaic tradition, to angels and holy men. “Thus the title designates persons in some special relationship with God as well as those who perform deeds of divine quality.” However, Luke’s genealogy contains the modifying statement: “he was the son (it was thought) of Joseph son of Heli” (Luke 3:23 NRSV) and this statement, “it was thought (or supposed)” is identified by Green as given to provide “Jesus with the legitimation needed in the world in which he will carry out his mission.” The verb νομίζω has a strong flavour of tradition or customary authority, with connotations of acknowledgement (as by Joseph), belief (as belief in gods), and esteem (as not only to be thought, but to be esteemed or held in honour as the son of Joseph of the line of David). Respect for parents will include an attempt in every sphere of life to bring honour to one’s ancestors, one’s parents and one’s family. Thus the genealogies in Matthew and Luke serve to legitimate Jesus’ standing in the world in which he lives.

What an honourable genealogy is expected to produce is an increase of honour, hence it is asked about John the Baptist: “Who (exactly) will this child be?” (Luke 1:66: my translation). Note that in the case of John the Baptist an Elijah figure is expected;

49 Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels, 408.
51 Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, 9th ed., s.v. “νομίζω.”
perhaps even a return of Elijah himself: Luke 1:17. Such children were not seen as going through stages of development but as already possessing the qualities they are to show as adult persons. Thus ancient biography seeks to display the significance of the adult from the moment of birth. While the task of the child is to obey and to learn, and so honour the family (Luke 2:47; 2:51), the adult task is to continue to increase such honour by exemplary deeds. The same pericope on John the Baptist emphasises the importance of naming in ancient Mediterranean cultures. The responsibility for naming belongs to the father, and a son may commonly be named after his father, but in any case should be named after a kinsman (Luke 1:59-63). The name in fact represents the person so closely that in many places it would not be wrong to say that the name and the person are the same. According to Neyrey, Plutarch “provides the best, most comprehensive, native discussion of names in antiquity.” Plutarch says that (in the Greco-Roman world) while the first name is the ‘proper name’ and the second the family or clan name, “the third name was adopted subsequently, and bestowed because of some exploit, or fortune, or bodily feature, or special excellence in a man.” He uses as examples from exploits ‘Soter’ (Saviour) or ‘Callinicus’ (Winner); from bodily features ‘Gryphus’ (Hook-nose); and “from a special excellence, as Euergetes (Benefactor) and Philadelphus (Generous).” The name Caesar famously means ‘curly’. Note the importance, especially to kings and rulers, of carrying an honorific name like ‘Soter’ (saviour): the first Ptolemaic ruler of Egypt received this name. This is an example of what Luke’s Jesus means by saying that rulers are called benefactors (Luke 22:25). Matthew’s Jesus gives such a nickname to Simon ‘Peter’ (Matt 16:18) the rock on which the church (ἐκκλησία) will be founded. ‘Many-namedness’ is honourable for deities and kings, and so the many titles given to

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54 Plut *Cor.* II.2-3.
Jesus in the Gospels underline his honour.\textsuperscript{56} The naming of John, however, was given by an angel, and his father’s “fiat”, says Green, is proof that he “is obedient to the angel, and thus to God” (Luke 1:63).\textsuperscript{57} So names are bestowed upon benefactors as honours, but in the case of children’s names, the parents choose them for qualities to be emulated in adult life.

For slaves in the Roman Empire, naming was very different to naming legitimate children.\textsuperscript{58} Slavery itself is defined by Patterson as “the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonoured persons.”\textsuperscript{59} The slave’s name might change every time the slave changed hands, because naming the slave was akin to naming the dog.\textsuperscript{60} Fear, constant threat, violent abuse and punishment, and having no fixed name or identity other than ‘slave’ gave slave children a deep sense of weakness, worthlessness, helplessness, and humiliation. There was similarity between children and slaves, however, in both Greek and Roman names that designated either (\textit{puer} and \textit{παῖς}) whether male or female.\textsuperscript{61} Obedience, attention and respect could be given to a series of masters and mistresses as the slave was sold or given to others. The name ‘slave’ itself legitimated violence and domination over child as well as adult slaves.

Triandis points out that in collectivist cultures dependence “of the child on the parents is often encouraged” and the parents “control their children by provoking high rates of interaction, guidance and consultation.”\textsuperscript{62} Where individualist parents encourage children to work independently and make decisions, collectivists view parental control as love “because it is part of the effort of parents to make the child a useful member of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Neyrey, \textit{Render to God}, 3.
\item Parkin & Pomeroy, \textit{Roman Social History}, 193.
\item Material in this paragraph from Orlando Patterson, \textit{Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 13.
\item Peter Garnsey, \textit{Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 125, ff. Slaves and children are viewed as part of the master or property of the master in a way not characteristic of women.
\item Harry C. Triandis, \textit{Individualism and Collectivism} (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 63.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
ingroup or society.” ^{63} This produces a child or person who is constantly looking to
others for direction as to the right course of behaviour. To obey this given direction is
the most important requirement of ancient children. The child demonstrates love of
parents by obedience, and the parents love their children when they control them and
enforce obedience.

Resseguie believes that Luke intends at 18:16-17 for the Kingdom of God to be
“received as though one were of the same status as a little child” (recalling that the
faculty of reason and adult speech are considered worthy and to lack these is a defect): “a
child is vulnerable and at the margins of society — virtues dismissed by society but
highly prized in the kingdom.” ^{64}

To take the position of the youngest, then, is to accept a relatively devalued social
role including the possibility of violence. Note that it is adults who are expected to
become as children in certain respects. “This attitude is not highly valued in a society that
regards competence as the sure measure of greatness. Yet if the least are the greatest,
then the disciple is freed from the usual strivings for greatness.” ^{65} One cannot presume
that one has control over events or other persons. In this connection, I support Trainor’s
view that Jesus is reminding the disciples, in the midst of their competition for honour,
that they will be as much broken and given for others as a result of their “participation in
the meal and solidarity with the abused Jesus … as victims of brutality and
violence.” ^{66} That crucifixion was designed to abuse and dishonour is evident; that verbal
abuse was as serious as physical or sexual abuse is also clear, because the word is as the
action. In contrast to “earlier devotional spirituality” Trainor opposes the idea that
disciples are expected to “seek to be sacrificial victims of abuse” but instead, “the words

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^ {63} Triandis, Individualism and Collectivism, 63.
^ {65} Resseguie, Spiritual Landscape, 55.
anticipate what … disciples will experience”: the reality of the world both then and now means that “some will experience mal-treatment and abuse.”\textsuperscript{67} This will place Jesus in solidarity with them, in my view, for he has himself experienced (will experience, at this point in Luke’s gospel) dishonour, weakness, vulnerability, and mortal violence.

Since the ancients believed that intelligence belongs to adults, one must adopt a stance of knowing very little and being in need of instruction.\textsuperscript{68} Jesus, suggesting that the guest has greater honour, nonetheless requires the most honoured (“the one presiding”: Luke 22:26: my translation) to receive the teaching of the unlearned, and specifically of the person who is under his or her direction. Note again the importance of learning, wisdom, and intellectual acquirements in Judaic tradition particularly. This must be modified, according to Luke, in favour of other values, the childlike values of respect and obedience. It is these childlike qualities that legitimate authority in the Kingdom of God, not the characteristics of public generosity and benefaction adopted by adult rulers.

\textbf{Ancient Work}

In this section we will visit the economy of the first-century Mediterranean world, with a particular view to the social standing of various types of workers. We will look at the most common occupations, especially as they are mentioned in Luke-Acts, and we will also have an overview of different kinds of workers, basically the three main statuses of family, freedman or freedwoman, and slave labourers. Based on this study, we can then attempt to discover who the waiters may be that Jesus mentions at Luke 22:27.

The two social worlds of \textit{oikía} and \textit{pólis} inhabited by ancient Mediterranean persons determined one’s trade or occupation; a person was typically born into a line of

\textsuperscript{67} Trainor, “Sexual Abuse and Luke’s Story of Jesus”: 41.
\textsuperscript{68} Oxford Classical Dictionary, 5th ed., s.v. “Children.”
work and followed the parental business. If they could afford it, parents might apprentice a child to a craft, partly to avoid the costs of feeding the child.69 Girls were brought up entirely by the women of the household and given adult tasks from a very early age.70 In addition to working the land together, members of a household might carry on crafts or trades. Peter, James and John are fishermen (Luke 5:10-11). Women might work in the family business by preparing or selling produce or preparing it for sale: for example, Peter’s wife or mother-in-law (Luke 4:28) may have dried or salted the catch, as dried fish was a principal export crop.71 In the event of government service, it was the πόλις that provided employment to slave or free managers under the patronage of elite directors.72 But by far the most common occupation, the work of most people, was farming the land.

Behind the fear and hostility to outsiders shown by persons in first-century collectivist cultures is a socio-economic structure informed by dearth and want. The system in Palestine was what Malina calls a ‘ruralised society’ in which “the great landowners set the agenda for the empire on the basis of their interests, values, and concerns.”73 City populations existed largely to serve the great households that provided a stage or backdrop to performances of wealth, power and control undertaken by elites in competition with one another. Collections of retainers, artisans and servants assisted these dramas of representation. The main living spaces of the rich and powerful were, however, located in the countryside, where huge villas provided all physical and cultural amenities in the midst of “vast agricultural estates worked by slaves in the West and

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69 Material in this paragraph from Shelton, As the Romans Did, 111-112.
70 Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels, 387.
71 deSilva Honor, Patronage, 179.
largely by tenants in the East.”  Luke 16:1-13 may refer to the manager of one of these large estates. All goods were seen as in limited supply. Thus intangibles like security, friendship, respect, love, virility and, above all, honour are scarce and “inherent in nature” in the same way as land, “there to be divided and redivided, if possible and necessary, but never to be increased.” Thus the Temple authorities can reduce the limited supply of honour for Jesus and his disciples by suborning Judas (Luke 22:2-5): at Luke 22:47-48 we see the public dishonouring.

The best way to assure survival and gain things needed in this world of scarcity was to have access to patrons. A wealthy or influential patron could provide benefits and this promoted his or her honour. Seneca advised that patrons should “help one person with money, another with credit, another with influence, another with advice, another with sound precepts.” Note that credit creates debt, advice must be taken, and influence leads to obligations. The immediate obligation of recipients was thanksgiving and praise: as Pliny says, “everyone who is influenced by thoughts of *fama* and *gloria* takes great pleasure in words of praise and appreciation even from lesser men.” The client who expressed gratitude in this public way “advertised his own inferiority,” but this was not dishonourable if the client was of a lower social level: benefactions often elicited praise from citizens to public figures as from client to patron. We see a political patronage event at Luke 23:12 between Herod and Pilate: Herod has acknowledged Pilate’s (or the Romans’) greater authority by sending Jesus back to him, and as a result “Herod and Pilate became friends with each other,” which is a patronage relationship (Luke 23:12 NRSV). Because Herod had unsuccessfully tried to see Jesus at Luke 9:9,

76 Sen. *Brev. 1.2.4. LCL*.
77 *Plin. Ep. 4.12*.
Pilate was able to grant his wish to see him (Luke 23:8), thus creating an obligation. “Before this they had been enemies” who both contended for the same authority (Luke 23:12 NRSV).79 Benefactors, we recall, were acting as patrons to the πόλις, and this helped legitimate their standing.

Elite writers in the ancient world viewed labour as the opposite of otium, or leisure for self-development through philosophy, education, politics and culture, and in this view the labour even of free persons was seen as slavish behaviour. Seneca viewed manual work as without beauty or goodness (in the moral sense), while Cicero found that wages pay for the work and not the craft or result, reducing the worker to the status of a slave: “The very wage they receive is the pledge of their slavery.”80 Farm work in general was understood to be “compulsory labour” by both free and slave in the Roman Empire.81 Work of all kinds would thus be less honourable than landowning, and the work of a table servant or waiter lesser to the leisured role (otium) of reclining to dine (Luke 22:27). (Another distinction between otium and serving is seen with Martha and Mary at Luke 10:38-42).

There was also no separate existence for a money economy. Markets were not freely existing entities, nor was there a theory or system of money. Everything to do with money, its production, consumption, taxation and distribution was dependent on the agendas of either family or politics. Politics and patronage would decide how luxury goods reached temples and palaces and how armies were paid and equipped. There was, however, “a currency standard common to almost all parts of the Empire,” with mints at Lyons and Rome producing coinage for the west, and provincial mints in the east.

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producing a freely tradable drachma coin analogous to the denarius produced at Rome, with Egypt alone having its singular money.82 This brings to mind the work caused by trading which sent sailors and merchants across the Mediterranean and beyond, both to transport crops and often to supply luxuries to the rich. Acts 27 describes the heavy work done by seamen in routine trading routes around the ports “along the coast of Asia” (Acts 27:2 NRSV), the anxieties over the cargo (Acts 27:10) and during the dangers of storms (Acts 27:14-19). The coin lost by the woman at Luke 15:8-10 is a silver drachma, equivalent to the silver denarius required for payment of the Roman tribute tax: we see the denarius named explicitly at Luke 20:20-26, where the image of Caesar, the great benefactor of the Roman world, is one of the points of debate.83

The Roman Emperor was the largest landowner throughout the Empire. Local managers “might exploit agricultural land by leasing to tenants, or mines and quarries by the direct employment of slaves” and these managers could be oppressive, requiring uncontracted extra days of free labour from tenants: i.e., treating them like slaves.84 We see the relationship between landowner and tenant at Luke 16:1-13 where the manager saves himself from disgrace by cutting the tenants’ obligations, and Luke 20:9-19, where the tenants refuse to give the owner his entitlements. Farming and agricultural analogies are often used in the parables. Luke 6:43-45; 8:4-8; 12:13-21; 13:6-9; 13:18-19; 15:11-32; 17:7-10 are all concerned with the land, the farm or the estate. As to the workers, Jesus assumes, at Luke 17:7-10, that slaves are owned by many in his audience of presumably farming people (and here they are specifically his disciples), and he makes reference to the slave status: worthless (Luke 17:10).

In summary, we see that in an economic world dominated by large landowners, where possession of land was a determinant of respect, and most people lived by

84 Material in this paragraph from Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 96-97.
working the land, other occupations either supported the elite performances of the great or added to the subsistence of the extended family by various crafts and services. Labour might be family, the most trusted (Luke 15:25), hired labour (Luke 15:17) or slaves (Luke 12:35-38). But even the work of free persons lacked the honour of leisureed pursuits. Slaves were also stigmatised as persons without honour. We will now look at the working life of slaves in a slave society.

**Living Instruments**

The Roman Empire was a slave society, that is, one substantially dependent on slave labour, and shared the characteristic of slave societies that the ownership of many slaves was honourable to the master. Patterson observes that in all such societies, the masters live in a competitive environment where honour is the prime value and slaves increase the master’s honourable public reputation. Explicit obedience is usually enforced with violence. The sign that the slave deserves his or her fate can be seen on the back: inferiority is designated by the scars of the whip. Paul (Acts 16:19-39) on being flogged in a Roman colony (Acts 16:11) while himself a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37) refuses to come out of prison without an apology from the authorities (Acts 16:37-39), and this flogging is all the worse because it takes place in public (Acts 16:37) and so is designed for dishonour.

Slaves, who comprised in the time of Augustus over one third of the population of the Roman Empire, were viewed as ‘living instruments’ or tools who were trained for whatever job their master preferred. However, although slaves were viewed as household property, they were seen as “different from the other tools in being alive, and

86 Material in this paragraph from Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: honour, 92; violence, 52.
87 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 12, 58. Aquinas renders the definition thus: “servus est organum animatum activum separatum alterius homo existens.” *Aquinas In Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Exposito* 2.29.
in being a tool for action rather than for production as a shuttle is.”

Slaves lost their identity through being sold away from their kin, as it was vital to know one’s father and thus one’s ancestors, but they still had nationality, and nations were known by stereotyped characteristics. Since honourable people showed respect to their past by dwelling on the “continuity and antiquity” of the family’s history, slaves having no such history were seen as treacherous and untrustworthy. Also, skills and abilities were the result, not the cause, of social status. The *paterfamilias* stood in the relation of father to his slaves in respect of their training, and their skills and occupations derived from the schooling he gave them. Greco-Roman slave practices, suggests Glancy, were consistent across the Roman Empire: in spite of Judaic scriptural injunctions (Lev 25:39-46) and other religious laws, slaveholders tended to follow Roman cultural practice with their slaves. It was easy to become a slave as prisoner of war or kidnapping. For example, the entire surviving population of Jerusalem was sold into slavery in 70 CE. But most commonly slaves were born into slavery, either as children of slave mothers, or as children rejected by their fathers at birth. Slaves also accompanied the Roman army, and in general, one purpose of slaveholding in the Roman Empire was the demonstration of Roman dominance, power, and authority. Thus the benefactions of Roman Emperors were balanced by the domination of conquered peoples by the taking of slaves.

Slaves are persons under authority, as indeed, are almost all persons in the ancient world (the soldier’s example is given at Luke 7:8), but the slaves are most severely

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94 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 33, 40.
95 Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 132.
96 Bradley, *Slavery and Society*, 66, 30.
Authority is one of the themes in Luke-Acts, which is represented at Jesus’ Temptation by Satan’s use of ἐξουσία at Luke 4:6. Satan refers to the authority and consequent glory of the world’s kingdoms that is in his own gift. Slave owners clearly have power over their slaves. The willing submission of slaves to their owners was of course the ideal. Although the compliance of slaves and others was expected to flow from willingness, it was in fact enforced with violence. To be “the slave of all” (Mark 10:44 NRSV) is thus to be exposed to the risk of violent imposition of compliance from everyone.

It is important to understand that authority and domination were approved behaviours in ancient societies: parental authority over children (even when the latter are adults), group authority (as determined by the dominus) over individual members of the group, administrative (including military) authority over the populace. Obedience is likewise a desideratum, and persons are not supposed to have interior motivation: what Malina refers to as an “anti-introspective personality” is culturally desired. So the question about authority is very important to the group of Jesus’ disciples. In fact, at Luke 9:46-47 the disciples have already started arguing about greatness, and Jesus at that time has already shown the example of a child. The child is to be properly received as a valued guest, a high honour position, rather than as an insignificant person in the household, as we have shown children usually to be. “The least among all of you is the greatest” (Luke 9:48 NRSV) is the definition of legitimate authority in the Kingdom of God.

However, Malina’s perspective can be qualified, for, to be sure, if the person in authority is to have his or her wishes properly carried out, “the master needs the slave to

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100 See also Matt 18:1-4 and Mark 9:34-37. The advice about the greatest as a servant also occurs at Matt 23:11.
have agency and to take some initiative from interior subjectivity.”  

A slave, servant, or waiter was neither animal (as the Greeks thought: a mere body), nor mechanical, but was personal insofar as “the slave expressed acceptance of the master’s point of view so fully as to anticipate the master’s wishes.” Plato’s description of the “servants of the state” is a figure of speech that “draws on the image of the household attendant who fetches food and the articles used in daily life.” The servant in this analogy “is at the master’s beck and call, and attends any whim of the master without regard for the master’s true welfare.”

To make a judgement about the master’s welfare is not within his competence.

The influence of Stoic philosophy admitted a distinction between “flesh” or the “outer body” and an “essential self” which in the case of slaves and other inferiors was “an internal faculty of assent” which was identified with reason. Note that the function of reason in this example is to refine the power of assent: that is, to perfect the quality of obedience. Therefore legitimate authority in the Kingdom of God flows not only from outwardly observable behaviour, but also from interior motivation, which, in a collectivist culture, should align with the exterior person.

Harrill notes that obsequium is a term that “alludes to a legally enforced act of servile deference … Roman freedpersons had to perform for their former masters” and such compliance was judged ignoble and weak. Obsequium (submission) and fides (trustworthiness) were the ideal qualities of servants, although this was “the expression only of an ideal wish for social stability between slave and free”: obsequium has

104 Collins, Diakonia, 87.
connotations of obedience, yieldingness, and complaisance.\textsuperscript{107} Because the ideal actor in ancient Mediterranean cultures was an adult, freeborn, elite male, possessing certain characteristics and not others, and particularly achieving the honourable status of manhood through domination and mastery (\textit{auctoritas}) over others, but also through self-mastery and self-control down to fine details of physical presence, any sign of “a weak bodily presence and deficient speech” rendered a man susceptible to charges of a slavish or servant-like character.\textsuperscript{108} The Roman Emperor provided the supreme example of \textit{auctoritas} when he was displayed in imagery, symbolism and imperial representations throughout the empire as benevolent, peace-bringing and possessed of moral force.\textsuperscript{109} The Roman Emperor was of course the supreme benefactor in the Roman Empire.

The slave’s duties are discussed at Luke 17:7-10, with special emphasis on the role of the disciples as analogous to that of slaves. The slave is envisaged as first working in the fields (Luke 17:7) and then returning home to be told to prepare the master’s meal and serve it (Luke 17:8). Luke’s Jesus indicates that the opposite situation, where the master invites the slave to dine with him, is absurd. Furthermore, the slave is owed no thanks for having done “what was commanded” (Luke 17:9 NRSV). The disciples are told that, like the slaves, they are to do everything as they were ordered, and in spite of this, they remain “worthless slaves” (Luke 17:10 NRSV). The role of meal serving is here specifically a slave’s role. Dowling observes that “repeated displays of the non-agency of slaves in the Lukan slave parables are not easily overturned.”\textsuperscript{110} So the lack of honour of someone presiding at a banquet while the guests recline is specifically slavish at Luke

\textsuperscript{107} Keith Bradley, \textit{Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 39. However, when the gods show favour to human beings, the term is derived from obsequor. Cassell’s New Latin-English, English-Latin Dictionary, 5\textsuperscript{th} ed. s.v. “fides”; “obsequium”; “obsequor.”


22:26-27, although Jesus reminds the disciples that eventually they will “eat and drink in my kingdom” as a reward (Luke 22:28-30 NRSV).

In summary, the ancient Mediterranean world hosted an economic structure marked by the preoccupations of wealthy landowners whose interest in the people beneath them was purely instrumental. Slaveholding was normal and accompanied by violence, and natural inequality between persons, families, and nations was taken for granted. Authority was enforced throughout the social setting, and inequalities within the family resulted in a hierarchy of older above younger, male above female, master or mistress above slaves, with freedpersons dependent upon their former masters for patronage to help them survive. Children, who lived in an atmosphere of high mortality and risk, were the least honoured: it was a world that respected adults. Most people lived close to subsistence level, while the Roman Emperor, the largest landowner, was also the greatest benefactor. Work was looked down upon by the elites, with little distinction between expectations of slaves and free persons. Thus the desiderata for the Kingdom of God, where children are honoured and legitimate authority resides in slaves, are counter-cultural in every way.

**The Waiter at the Symposium**

Jesus gives his final instructions to his disciples in the context of a festal meal. Garnsey, in a chapter entitled “You Are With Whom You Eat,” points out that meals are a “conspicuous feature of ancient society” that reinforces hierarchies, status, solidarity, and belonging. In collectivist cultures, as we have noted, the ingroup distinguishes itself from outgroups, and in this setting meals provide a way for people to “confirm established roles and statuses within the group” while strengthening the “boundaries

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111 Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society*, 128.
defining a group or institution” and keeping stable the continuance of the group’s “values, lines, classifications, and its symbolic world.” A Passover meal, naturally, reinforces Israelite identity and memory of covenant, liberation, and inheritance of the land. It is about ethnic and religious ‘chosenness’ and relationship with the God of Israel. So therefore such a meal in first-century Jerusalem was a loaded occasion for both political and ritual reasons.

The Greek word κατάλυμα (at Luke 22:11) means ‘inn’ and this brings back to mind Luke 2:7. Innkeepers in Jerusalem were dependent on pilgrim inflows: indeed Jerusalem regularly had to cater for large numbers of people from all over the known world, and Passover was a major pilgrimage occasion. Jeremias states that “pilgrims brought considerable traffic to those engaged in the catering trades” because it was expected that some of the tithe money would be “brought into Jerusalem and spent there.” Meal serving in general could take place in a restaurant (or inn, apparently, in Luke 22:11) where slaves, freedpersons, or family, including children, could be waiters; in a wealthy household where trained domestics would serve elaborate meals; or in a poorer situation as at Luke 17:7-10 where the master has no dedicated slave to do the cooking or serving but must use the slave of all work. While “the ideology assigned domestic labor inside the household to women in contrast to men’s labor outside the house in the fields and in the public sphere,” epigraphic records indicate that women did work beside their husbands in various trades and crafts, particularly “clothing production and food service.” This invites the possibility that some of the waiters at the Last Supper may

114 Jeremias, Jerusalem, 102-103.
115 Philip A. Harland, Associations, Synagogues and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 38. For training, occupational ‘guilds’ might do some training, bearing in mind the “common practice in antiquity for sons to follow at their father’s trade, so that it would not be surprising to find particular families at the forefront of certain guilds from one generation to the next.”
have been women. Matt 8:14 shows Peter’s mother-in-law serving, and Martha famously
complains about the work involved in serving the disciples (Martha has ‘much serving’ to
do: Luke 10:40 KJV). These women are undertaking family labour, the most trusted kind,
while slaves must be commanded and compelled to work. We have already seen that the
group around Jesus is a fictive kin group or substitute family, and at Luke 14:26 it is
made clear that the former family must be completely rejected before someone can enter
the new group. This increases the likelihood that waiters at the Last Supper may come
from within the Jesus group.

Among the features of a Passover meal that were regulated by tradition were the
importance of reclining, the specific foods to be consumed, the topics of discussion and
the questions to be asked.117 Jewish as well as classical sources reveal that “reclining is a
synonym for dining” in antiquity, but the arrangement of host and guests is slightly
different, with the Jewish host positioned “in the middle of the middle couch” of the
triclinium, with the usual Mediterranean competition over the seating arrangements,
including who will have the place of honour at the host’s right (distinct from the Roman
place of honour on the host’s left), who will be the first to recline, and such points of
etiquette with reference to the value of honour.118 We see the disciples at Luke 22:24
arguing over these things in the culturally expected manner. Jewish sources direct that
Jews must recline for the Passover dinner, because it celebrates liberation from slavery in
Egypt, as they are apparently doing at Luke 22:27.119 Reclining at the Passover meal was
established practice in Hellenistic times.120 Goodman notes that “the identification with
past slavery must have made a greater impact in a household where domestic slaves
themselves … poured the four cups of wine to each of those present as they reclined on

117 David Noy, “The Sixth Hour is the Mealtime for Scholars: Jewish Meals in the Roman World,” in Meals
in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World, 2nd ed., ed. Inge Nielsen and
Hanne Sigismund Nielsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2001), 139-140.
120 Green, Gospel of Luke, 758.
couches in celebration of their present freedom.” So we see that the standing waiters are in a lesser honour position than the guests at a first-century Mediterranean banquet, with special emphasis on the importance of reclining at Passover for Jewish tradition. In order for serving to legitimate leadership, then, the relative unimportance of the leaders has been pointed out at Luke 22:27. To put it bluntly, the leaders are less important than those who must recline because they are free.

Roller has studied the importance of dining posture in the Roman Empire and the significance of the bodily situations of reclining, sitting, and standing. He points out that the custom of reclining came from the Near East to Rome at an early period and not the reverse. “Dining posture in general,” he says, “is profoundly intertwined with key social values” and while a person who takes “a particular posture and a particular relationship to other bodies” also assumes certain values, a person to whom these values “are ascribed is thereby authorized to assume a particular dining posture.” Reclining, however culturally interpreted in various locations and expressive of unique systems of “social values and symbols,” is always associated with privilege. In fact the “postural hierarchy” is consistent, in that reclining is more honourable than sitting, and sitting more honourable than standing, and what is being defined in this dining context is the necessity to remain alert to the requirements of others: “relative states of relaxation and tension” determine the relative social positions. The attentiveness of servers signifies a lesser social value, because “reclining to dine was, always, a position conveying power and status in the ancient world” and waiters were required not only to stand when not serving but also to remain completely silent. As indicated above, we recall that the

121 Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem, 239.
disciples have already, as legitimate leaders giving directions to others, served a banquet to the reclining guests at the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:14-17).

Speech was also ritualised at the Passover meal. Both food and diners had to be blessed: bread and wine were blessed separately. Both guests and host should also be blessed, especially where religious discussions were to be held as part of the meal entertainment.124 The discussion at the Last Supper revolves around Jesus’ expectations for the disciples in the near future. Luke casts Jesus’ speech in a literary form known as the Farewell Discourse, which was expected to contain certain features which Neyrey lists: it includes predictions about the coming death and subsequent events, the “legacy” given to the group, “exhortation to a specific virtue” and lastly “commission of a successor.”125 As a person approached his or her own death, that person could predict future events, according to ancient belief.126 Malina and Rohrbaugh point to a range of classical and biblical cases where dying leaders and heroes predicted the fates of others because, as Xenophon states: “At the advent of death, men become more divine, and hence can foresee the forthcoming”.127 The nearness of death brings persons “closer to the realm of God (or gods) who knows all things” and thus “puts a person into a specific type of altered state of consciousness, a special way of knowing from the viewpoint of God.”128 Luke places this divinely inspired foretelling in the context of the Passover meal where the relationship between Israel (the whole people of Israel) and the God of Israel is particularly emphasised. It is at this particular time and place, Passover at Jerusalem, that Jesus gives his directions concerning legitimate authority in the Kingdom of God.

Kurz points out that in antiquity the farewell address provides its audience with a model “to be imitated” through the narrative means of showing, or demonstrating an

126 Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels, 361.
127 Xen. Cyr. 7.7.21.
128 Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels, 361.
action. At Luke 22:24-27 Jesus “is teaching his apostles an explicit lesson about authority as service,” says Kurz, and here Jesus points to his own experience as “one who serves” (Luke 22:27 NRSV). It may be noted that classical sources show how serving oneself could be seen as selfish or unsociable behaviour, so the role of waiters in the provision of food is crucial for the companionship of the dinner. This is not about having no waiters to serve the meal. To the contrary, the reversal of honour positions “likens Jesus’ authority to that of a table waiter,” and illustrates Jesus’ insistence on the idea that “authority is in fact a form of service.”

There is a specific distinction of status at Luke 22:27: “For who is greater, the one reclining or the one serving; is it not the one reclining?” (Luke 22:27: my translation). We have already seen that reclining is a position of power and respect in ancient Mediterranean meal practices, and the attendant or waiter is not only standing but silent. The reclining person at Luke 22:27 may be either host or guest: it is the one being served the meal. The servants “were excluded, by their postures as well as actions, from the leisure and pleasure enjoyed by the reclining diners” although they were the ones who “made the reclining diners’ leisure and pleasures possible.” Seneca shows the waiters as themselves hungry, waiting silently for their master’s orders, while Petronius has the freedman Trimalchio give the specific dismissal from service that allows them to eat. At this point we may ask a question: insofar as the waiters are on the margins of the meal’s internal meaning, which in the case of a Passover supper is the unification and

134 Sen. Ep. 47.3; Petron. Sat. 74.6-7.
blessing of the whole people of Israel, what role are they expected to play in the
“completion of God’s purpose?”

Green notes that the Passover rites “had a field of vision that encompasses past,
present, and future, so that the feast anticipated eschatological deliverance, a second
exodus, so to speak.” But the Lukan Jesus has already made clear, at 17:10, that “a
slave who is simply completing his work does not by so doing place his master under any
obligation to reward him.” According to Danker: “Servanthood is the only legitimate
status in the Kingdom” because “the road to greatness leads through service.”

However, Collins points out that attendants at ancient banquets were not necessarily
slaves and may have been “engaged in duties other than attending directly on the needs
of diners at the table” which he thinks reflects “an emphasis … on the activity of waiting
or attending rather than an awareness of the status of the waiter as servant or slave.”

Recall, however, that Jesus directly compares the disciples to slaves at Luke 17:10. Jesus
has already made the connection between leadership and slavery at Luke 12:42-44. Here
the manager who is placed in charge of other slaves is himself a slave. If he does his
work of oversight well, he will be rewarded with more responsibility (Luke 12:44). As
Danker so winningly puts it, “imitation of the superstar is a recurring theme in Greco-
Roman documents of recognition,” and Jesus here presents himself as a definite model
to be imitated. The legitimate rulers of the Kingdom of God will be persons who are
under authority, who on fulfilling their mission will be served by the master himself
(Luke 12:37). Danker shows that the semantic field of ‘greatness’ is still the social
construction in this passage: there is no thought of removing ‘greatness’ as a criterion or
desideratum. Green suggests that “the significance of meal sharing” developed in the

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139 Collins, *Diakonia*, 155.
140 Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, 49.
ministry of the Lukan Jesus is “characterized by a reversal of normal status-oriented
corns and conventions.” A reversal, however, does not negate the primary values of
ancient Mediterranean cultures: rather, it changes the beneficiaries of actions and the
qualifications for respect.

Therefore, the Lukan Jesus suggests that authority (the ability to control the
behaviour of others) lies in the personal qualities needed for appropriate and honourable
service: obedience, submission, the “faculty of assent” to the requirements of others. How can control (authority) and being controlled (submission) come to the same thing? From the point of view of the waiter, this faculty of obeying before the wish is even expressed is a sign of loyalty towards the host, who gains honour from faultless service towards the guests. Loyalty is honourable. So therefore loyalty, or faithfulness, is the requirement for authority in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus has already noted at Luke 14:7 the behaviour of people at a banquet who
strive for “the places of honour” and he has given the advice, “go and sit down at the
lowest place,” for “all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble
themselves will be exalted” (Luke 14:10-11 NRSV). The waiters or attendants are not
even sitting, as we have seen. As Malina points out, in Mediterranean antiquity service “is
servile because slave and non-slave belonged to two different species, so to speak, similar
to the way humans differed from God” and so the work of service “refers to tasks
performed by lesser persons for those who control their existence.” And so for people
in attendance upon others, paying attention is the most critical part of their experience.
The leaders would be in attendance upon people who command their loyalty. Typically,
as Neyrey says, those who receive loyalty are kinfolk, and in the fictive kin group, such as

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Yes, there is a Kingdom. The governors of the Kingdom are not benefactors, although, like the imperial slaves, they may mediate the benefactions of God; they are slaves.

In summary, we have seen that the loyalty of children is first of all towards their parents, and this is a responsibility that lasts to their final breath (John 19:26-27). We have observed that the loyalty of slaves, freedpersons, and servants of all kinds is to their master or mistress, patron, or boss, and this obligation is so intense as to require attention to the master’s thoughts and wants before they are even mentioned. With the specific task of the waiter, the loyalty is to the host, who needs assistance in appropriately honouring the guests, the reclining ones, those worthy of honour.

We have seen that the new Promised Land of the Kingdom of God is a place, or condition of life, that is free of shame. It is governed by persons with attentiveness to the wants and needs of those under their authority such that, like the loyal slave, they may have “completed and developed what the master had only suggested or even unconsciously desired.” These leaders show a childlike obedience, respect, devotion and attachment that is free of attempts to display their own honour or greatness as well as a presumption of ignorance and need to acquire wisdom from even the lowliest teachers.

Holy spirit greatness, therefore, differs from worldly greatness so much that it reverses the normal order of persons. The necessary hierarchy of ancient societies is

upended, the high become low (Luke 14:11) and the least become the greatest (Luke 9:48). The leaders/slaves who remain attentive in this way will be rewarded at the return of their own master (Luke 12:37) who will ask them to recline (ἀνακλίνω) and who will honour them by serving them himself (Luke 22:27).
CONCLUSION: HUMILITY IN THE MIDST OF DISHONOUR

The question about what legitimates authority was complicated by competing honour fields in first-century Jerusalem (Luke 20:21-22). On the side of Caesar we saw extensive benefactions provided by wealthy individuals and families. The source of that wealth was taxation, expropriation, and confiscation. While the Roman Emperor was the most lavish benefactor in the ancient world, the Herodian rulers used benefaction as a means to Hellenise Israel and to place the land more securely under Roman domination. Although Luke finds wealth problematical at all times (Luke 14:33), Jesus’ statement that dominating gentile rulers are called benefactors suggests that benefaction is not the way to legitimate power (Luke 22:25). So the question we have examined is about what legitimates spiritual power in the Kingdom of God.

What legitimates authority? The honourable status of ‘greatness’ and prominent positions at the banqueting table that point to high status are hardly appropriate for a group whose loyalties are under threat (Luke 22:31-32). It is Judas who provides the explicit example of one who has been open to spirit possession and thereby fallen into the hands of Satan. This leads him to dishonour the entire group by handing his master over to the Roman-appointed Temple establishment, a place (or household of God) of wealth transfer for “a religion whose giving practices had … been focused on the economy of a vast Hellenistic temple — the Temple of Jerusalem.”1 We have examined the financial practices of the Temple and seen how it swallowed resources provided under the patronage of the Hellenised high priestly families. The answer to spiritual legitimacy lay no more with them than the idea of ‘greatness’ applied to the dishonoured disciples (Luke 19:45).

We introduced the first-century collectivist culture, with its group emphasis, to point out that as every member of a group is responsible for the behaviour of all the others, all the disciples were involved in the defection of Judas. Jesus and his disciples are all dishonoured both within and outside their group, honour being public reputation, the most critical value in the first-century Mediterranean world. Although the internal workings of the *oikía* initiate Judas’ disgrace, because they all have to be aware of what he has done (Acts 1:15-19, where 120 people are present, public enough, within the *oikía*), it is in the *polis* that the consequences are tragically played out. And we observed how the military forces occupying the Near East and based with the legions in Syria were used as inducements to compliance; we have examined their role in tax collection. In cases of sedition they were empowered to dishonour by flogging (Luke 23:16), and carry out executions by crucifixion. They are the Roman means of legitimation via *potestas*, the use of might to substantiate lordship.

In summary, we have been able, through an understanding of the cultural and political context of the situation in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover dinner where Jesus delivered his Final Discourse, to see how spiritual authority could be made illegitimate: Luke does not seem to believe that the Temple represents legitimate authority under Roman governorship (Luke 13:34-35). We have also illuminated Jesus’ instructions that those in authority must represent themselves as “the youngest” and “one who serves” as resulting from the first-century respect for authoritarianism and patriarchal values, especially the expectations of obedience, submission, and bowing to authority of children and slaves (Luke 22:26 NRSV). We have seen that first-century children lived in an atmosphere of high mortality and dread, haunted by demons and contagious disease, and we have seen that in this atmosphere they might be expendable, abandoned, or sold. Adults were valued: children existed to serve the needs of the family, to follow tradition, and to honour parents. Their role legitimated the past orientation of
ancient cultures and the place of descendents in the chain of inheritance that upheld the family’s honour standing and position in the world. Luke portrays this childlike role as a means of legitimating authority in the Kingdom of God.

We needed to examine the status and treatment of slaves to comprehend the dramatic and extraordinary command the Lukan Jesus presents at Luke 22:26-27. The Roman Empire was a slave society. While the roles of slave owner, husband and father were not only linked but analogous, the slave component of the household was virtually without human rights, readily exchangeable as a monetary transaction in the market at any time, named like the dog, often without family or readily separated from it, and kept in continual fear by the use of the whip. Yet this is how Jesus designates the disciples: as “worthless slaves” (Luke 17:10 NRSV). We are left with the paradox that among the disciples, people exercising power should be harmless, and that those in control should be obedient to the directions of others. Those most worthy of respect — the leaders — should be prepared to submit to abuse, including physical violence (Luke 6:22; Luke 9:24; Acts 9:16). These texts make it clear that persecution and violence can be expected from religious and secular authorities (Luke 21:12). While obedience to the Holy Spirit can lead to martyrdom, obedience and gentleness are not due only to God: Luke’s Jesus clearly states that they are owed to the reclining guests, those who are served (Luke 22:27). This, says Luke, is spiritual authority.

At Luke 9:46-48 Luke has Jesus give another answer to the question about greatness. Among these guests to be served with such reverence are children — (Luke 18:16) — specifically named as persons to be welcomed, and therefore honoured guests (Luke 9:47-48). At this point one might ask whether the churches found it possible to follow these instructions. Osiek notes that in 1 Peter, “the usual word for slaves, *doulai*, is
replaced by *oiketai*, specifically house slaves.”

So the emphasis here is on the church as a household, in which slaves are commanded to be obedient even to injustice (1 Pet 2:18), the younger must accept the authority of the elders (1 Pet 5:5), and at the same time the elders of the church are told, “do not lord it over those in your charge” (1 Pet 5:3). There is already here some modification of the statement at Luke 22:27. In fact, the bishops of the pre-Constantinian church “combined accessibility with an awesome power.”

They discerned who was worthy and who was unworthy of help or acceptance, whether money was tainted by its source or the character of those who provided it, what teachings were false, who should be expelled, what sinners must be corrected and which clerics replaced. They were godly enforcers, empowered to condemn persons to eternal punishment. They were required to care for widows and protect virgins, which, like the handling of money, placed them in positions where temptation was possible. They were expected to meddle in the private lives of their flock. And there was competition for honour and rank among these early prelates, just as between the disciples at the Last Supper in Jerusalem. Was Holy Spirit authority legitimated by servitude, as Luke’s Jesus insisted?

There is room for scholarly investigation as to how the early church responded to the idea that leaders should perform the role of slaves. Slaves, as we have observed, are obedient to masters, who have the power to flog them. Slaves are nameless, powerless, vulnerable beings without independent agency, whose directions are entirely in the hands of another. Through benefaction, says Green, kings “give to their subjects … in exchange for still greater power and homage,” but Green tells us that Luke points out how in the Kingdom of God “the link between status and service is disentangled.”

To what extent did the churches simply transfer the power and authority of kings and

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secular authorities to the rulers of the church? How much actual slave behaviour could be observed among the spiritual powers? Acts 2:44-47 portrays a society of communal friendship and fair distribution of wealth. For how long did this continue, and who took the role of slaves? Surely at Acts 6:1-5 there is a specific rejection of serving at tables with the consequence that some are appointed to the task while the others undertake the more honourable business of prayer. In other words, the disciples do exactly what the Lukan Jesus has told them not to do.

Another field of inquiry might be to predict the effect of suggesting the mode of governance laid out in Luke 22:26-27 on persons now inhabiting individualist cultures, with their emphasis on human rights and personal agency. One effect of the command to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19 NRSV) has been the incorporation of varying cultures into the Christian world. Some concepts from the biblical environment translate poorly or not at all into many languages and situations far removed from those of the first-century Mediterranean Roman Empire. The passage of history and development of philosophy, particularly at the Enlightenment, has led to changes in the way that people think and behave in Western cultures and also in other parts of the world, so much that the slave society of antiquity appears repellent to many and hardly an example to be followed. What legitimates spiritual authority today? This would seem to be a question for ecclesial and pastoral theologians based upon studies of biblical thought-worlds.

In conclusion, we can see that everything in the social world of Roman antiquity is written in superlatives. That crucifixion was a legal penalty is already evidence of the extreme quality of debasement and cruelty available to the culture. The power, wealth and magnificence of the Roman Emperor is beyond comparison, although the lack of accountability of a Nero or Caligula has been emulated, admittedly with some success, by Hitler and Stalin in the twentieth century. In the economy of the nations, as well as the economy of salvation, Jesus’ insistence (at Luke 22:21-27) that Holy Spirit power resides
in servitude rather than in benefaction is a true reversal, in which those who align
themselves with the weak, the poor and the oppressed, in Byrne’s words, “embrace the
only security that is of lasting value.”

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