

LUKE 10-24

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WISDOM COMMENTARY

Volume 43B

# Luke 10–24

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Barbara E. Reid, OP  
*General Editor*



A Michael Glazier Book

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# Abbreviations

21KJ	Twenty-First-Century King James Version
AB	Anchor Bible series
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
ASV	American Standard Version
BCE	Before the Common Era
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>

BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CE	Common Era
Colloq	<i>Colloquium</i>
CSSRB	<i>Council of Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin</i>
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research (formerly Currents in Research: Biblical Studies)</i>
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
ECL	Early Christianity and Its Literature
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HDR	Harvard Dissertation in Religion
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JRT	<i>Journal of Religious Thought</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>



<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
KIT	Kleine Texte
LAE	Life of Adam and Eve
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
<i>LTQ</i>	<i>Lexington Theological Quarterly</i>
LXX	Septuagint
NA <sup>28</sup>	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.
NAB	New American Bible
NABRE	New American Bible, Revised Edition
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies, and Documents
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>

REB	Revised English Bible
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTSU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
SP	Sacra Pagina
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
SymS	Symposium Series
<i>TD</i>	<i>Theology Digest</i>
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>TJT</i>	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>
TWNT	<i>Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932–1979.
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WCS	Wisdom Commentary Series
WRGWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i> / <i>Journal of Ancient Christianity</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

## Luke 22:1-71

### *A Meal, an Arrest, and a Slave Woman's Truth*

This chapter narrates events in the life of Jesus from the Last Supper through his arrest and trial by Jewish authorities. Chapter 23 recounts the trial before Pilate and the crucifixion. These stories of Jesus's suffering, the responses of his companions during that suffering, and his own compassionate and faithful words in the midst of that suffering are at the heart of much Christian devotion. While we include reflection here on strands of the tradition that challenge, inspire, and uplift, we continue also to critique the Gospel for its androcentrism and kyriarchy.

Especially when compared with Markan source material, these two chapters exhibit Luke's tendency to ratchet up the androcentrism of the story of the Jesus movement and to underscore anti-Jewish themes, while diminishing its potential to be read as a critique of imperial power. In our analysis of these chapters we will return often to three organizing themes.

First, the *politics of crucifixion*. We analyze how Luke shifts blame from the Roman imperial system to "the Jews," and especially the Jewish leadership, as the force responsible for Jesus's death. We also note shifts in the narrative that serve to ally the story of Jesus's suffering and death more closely with Roman imperial ideology of crucifixion. The overwhelming historical consensus among biblical scholars in the post-Shoah

ecumenical context is that Jesus was crucified for sedition (a political crime), rather than for blasphemy (a religious accusation). The death of Jesus under Pontius Pilate was due to the Roman imperial system, with its concern to suppress any potential resistance by its subjects, rather than to an intra-religious quarrel among Jews about whether Jesus's messianic claims constituted an affront to the God of Israel. A further point of broad consensus is that these historical facts concerning crucifixion as an act of Roman imperial violence are veiled, to greater or lesser extent, in the four canonical Gospel accounts. The Gospel accounts foreground the Jerusalem leadership as chief instigators of the death sentence on religious grounds, while painting the Jewish crowds as compliant and Roman officers as reluctant instruments of the death penalty; they do not supply us with a credible account of who killed Jesus and why.<sup>1</sup> While signs of shifting blame for Jesus's death from the political system of the Romans to the religious sensibilities of "the Jews" are found already in the Gospel of Mark, Luke amplifies the guilt of Jerusalem's religious leaders in his version of the story.

A second recurring topic in our analysis of these two chapters concerns *legitimacy, leadership, and gender*. We have noted throughout our commentary that Luke privileges the twelve male apostles while rewriting traditions concerning women's agency in the direction of subordination and silence.<sup>2</sup> In Luke 22 and 23, these themes are pronounced, as Jesus commissions Peter to stand as first of the Twelve and to "strengthen your brothers" (22:32), promises the Twelve thrones on which they will sit to rule and judge (22:30), and diminishes Markan traditions of women's prominence in this central drama of Jesus's last meal, arrest, trial, and death.

A third strand of analysis concerns *Luke's distinctive Christology*. Luke departs from other early tradition with respect to Jesus's suffering and/or impassivity and also on the meaning of Jesus's death. While orthodox Christianity eventually comes to affirm that Jesus was born in the flesh and suffered in the flesh, some early Christians questioned these two assumptions. The Gospel of Luke is a site of contestation concerning Jesus's fleshly nature and his suffering. At several points in Luke's passion

1. See, for instance, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 97–199.

2. See "Luke: Friend of Women or Most Dangerous Book of the Bible?," in Barbara E. Reid and Shelly Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, WCS 43A (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021), lxii–lxvii. On the twelve male apostles, see Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 197, 277–78, and in this volume, pp. 291–92; 307–309.; on female disciples, see Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 184–86.

narrative Jesus is so calm, composed, and loquacious that readers might conclude that his “suffering” did not entail actual physical or emotional pain. At other points, often in textual traditions that are fluid, Jesus appears emotionally and physically tormented, and the fleshly nature of his body is underscored. Because the category wo/man is inherently tied to questions of the body and flesh, the question of whether Jesus also suffered in the flesh is a fruitful site of feminist reflection. Furthermore, Luke places distinct emphasis on Jesus’s death as the death of a prophet and *not* as a sacrificial atonement for sins.<sup>3</sup> Doctrines of sacrificial atonement have special place in womanist and feminist critique because these doctrines have been used to reify the suffering of those who are vulnerable. Thus, the lack of emphasis on sacrificial atonement in Luke can be celebrated as a feminist theological resource.<sup>4</sup>

### Passover Preparations (22:1-13)

#### *The Jewish Leaders, Judas, and Satan (22:1-6)*

Luke draws from Mark the details that the chief priests and scribes were hoping to kill Jesus before the Passover feast (vv. 1-2; cf. Mark 14:1-2) and that Judas initiated the plot to betray him (vv. 3-6; cf. Mark 14:10-11). But he attributes a different motive to the leaders. In the Markan account, the chief priests and scribes scheme to have Jesus killed as a means of preventing a riot at Passover (Mark 14:1-2). Given historical concerns of Jerusalem authorities to keep the peace, this explanation of the motive could be an instance of Realpolitik—Jesus’s death would prevent the “stirring up of crowds.”<sup>5</sup> Luke instead provides a motive that denigrates these leaders’ character by marking them as cowards who were afraid of the people: ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαόν (v. 2).

Most damningly, Luke characterizes the authorities as under Satan’s direct influence. Ancient demonology assumes that bodily penetration

3. Some scholars who think a theology of atonement is essential in Christian soteriology find such in Luke, although this is a minority position. See, e.g., John Kimbell, *The Atonement in Lukan Theology* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014). For a survey of various theological understandings of the death of Jesus in Luke, see Timothy W. Reardon, “Recent Trajectories and Themes in Lukan Soteriology,” *CurBR* 12 (2013): 77–95.

4. See references in notes 17–20 in this chapter.

5. Compare our discussion of Herod Antipas’s motive for executing John the Baptist, according to Josephus, in Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 99–102.

## Luke 22:1-13

<sup>22:1</sup>Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near. <sup>2</sup>The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people. <sup>3</sup>Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; <sup>4</sup>he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. <sup>5</sup>They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup>So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.

<sup>7</sup>Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had

to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it."

<sup>9</sup>They asked him, "Where do you want us to make preparations for it?" <sup>10</sup>"Listen," he said to them, "when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters <sup>11</sup>and say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'

<sup>12</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there." <sup>13</sup>So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

by a demon is the mark of one who is inferior, weak, and womanish. As one into whom Satan himself has entered, Judas is a subject of utmost depravity. By conferring with the temple leadership, Judas turns that leadership into Satan's associates. Satan now has the upper hand, making possible the arrest of Jesus (cf. 22:53b: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness!") and ultimately his crucifixion.

### *The Redactional Seam*

While Luke follows Mark on (1) the chief priests' and scribes' desire to kill (Mark 14:1-2) and (2) Judas's plot with them (Mark 14:10-11), he does not include the narrative of the woman who anointed Jesus before his death, which is sandwiched between these two scenes (Mark 14:3-9). Because it falls between these two pericopes to which Luke adheres quite closely, the omission appears deliberate. That is, between verses 2 and 3 of Luke 22, we find a redactional seam this author has stitched, after choosing to leave the story of the woman anointing Jesus on the cutting room floor (see table below).

Mark 14:1-11	Luke 22:1-6
<p><b>14:1</b>It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; <b>2</b>for they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”</p> <p><b>3</b>While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. <b>6</b>. . . Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. <b>7</b>. . . <b>8</b>She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. <b>9</b>Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”</p> <p><b>10</b>Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. <b>11</b>When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.</p>	<p><b>22:1</b>Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near. <b>2</b>The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>SEAM – SEAM – SEAM – SEAM – SEAM</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>SEAM – SEAM – SEAM – SEAM – SEAM</p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>3</b>Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; <b>4</b>he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. <b>5</b>They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. <b>6</b>So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.</p>

Many explain Luke's alterations here by focusing on what Luke *gains* in terms of his redactional plan, through omitting the anointing story. François Bovon observes that the omission serves to bring into closer connection the murderous intention of the religious leaders and the successful Satanic plot.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Sharon H. Ringe notes that because of the omission of the woman's story, "there is nothing to alleviate the stark horror of the authorities' plan and its motives."<sup>7</sup> Greg Carey suggests that Luke's modifications enable the author to avoid the problematic saying concerning poverty (Mark 14:7, "you always have the poor with you"). Further, it allows Luke to focus on Jesus's death "as a tragedy, ushered into salvation history through the resurrection," rather than as "a sacrifice for sins or as a saving event in its own right."<sup>8</sup>

Yet, those looking for traces of wo/men's agency and prominence in the Jesus movement might mourn what has been lost through this redactional cut. Since the publication of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her*, a title inspired by the promise concerning this woman's memory in Mark 14:9, the story has served to mark the importance of reconstructing the past with wo/men at the center.<sup>9</sup>

Even in Mark's version, the story has been framed androcentrically: the woman is nameless and unspeaking; Jesus himself offers the interpretation of her deed, which she performs in silence and in private. There is no explicit indication that she understands the significance of her actions before Jesus interprets them. Furthermore, the story may be critiqued as an affirmation of imperialist expansion, through its imagining the entire world, ὅλον τὸν κόσμον (Mark 14:9), as a potential stage for gospel proclamation.

Still, in the shards of previous tellings from which Mark composes, we see traces of a woman (or, possibly, of women) with enormous significance in the *basileia* movement. The action of anointing Jesus on the head

6. François Bovon, *Luke*, trans. Christine M. Thomas, 3 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002–2013), 3:138.

7. Sharon H. Ringe, *Luke*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 258.

8. Greg Carey, "Moving Things Ahead: A Lukan Redactional Technique and Its Implications for Gospel Origins," *BibInt* 21 (2013): 302–19, esp. 312.

9. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, 10th ann. ed (New York: Crossroad, 1994), esp. xlili–lv, 145–51.



evokes the ancient practice of the prophets of Israel, who also designated kings through that ritual act (cf. 1 Sam 10:1; 16:13). Through interpreting her deed as an anointing “for burial,” the Markan Jesus aligns her actions with an overarching Markan theme, that Jesus’s identity as messiah—the anointed one—is necessarily intertwined with the fact of his suffering and death (cf. Mark 8:29-33). Finally, the promise of Jesus linking this woman’s deed to the gospel, “wherever it is preached,” suggests that her action is an essential component of the gospel, deserving memorialization across time and space. Moving from Mark’s narrative to historical reconstruction, we argue for this woman’s agency in the “authorship” of this gospel and her significance in its continued proclamation. As Marianne Sawicki puts it:

This Gospel establishes and stabilizes a version of Jesus that first was produced by someone else. Its inventor was the woman who is credited in Mark 14:9. That verse serves as both a citation attributing credit and an assurance that the information is authoritative because of its source. The anointing of Jesus is the mimetic inscription of his christological identity upon his body as a destining for death. The anointing was an event of ecclesial poiesis<sup>10</sup> occurring after Calvary. The woman’s poiesis of Jesus as anointed-for-death is “her memory”: that is, the distinctive memory or version of Jesus that is her gift to the church. . . . It is beside the point to try to assign a name or an individual authorial identity to “her.” Quite likely, “she” was a “them”—but, very significantly, a feminine them.<sup>11</sup>

10. The Greek word ποιησις (*poiēsis*) means “the process of activity, doing, working” or “the product of activity, work, creation” (BDAG, 842). Marianne Sawicki (*Seeing the Lord: Resurrection and Early Christian Practices* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994], 150) uses poiesis for “a creatively constructive enterprise.”

11. Sawicki, *Seeing the Lord*, 150–51. Note also Sawicki’s decision to translate εἰς μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς as a subjective genitive, “in her memory,” rather than as an objective genitive, “in memory of her” (Mark 14:9). Others who have argued that Jesus’s passion originated in women’s lament traditions include Kathleen E. Corley, *Maranatha: Women’s Funerary Rituals and Christian Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 111–33, and (though his division of women as lamenting and men as exegeting is problematic) John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 527–73. See Nicola Denzey’s review of *Maranatha* (CBQ 74 [2012]: 594–96) questioning Corley’s claims.

Whatever positive gain we allow to Luke in his redactional interest to bind more closely the scheming authorities and Judas, the loss of this story from Luke is something to grieve. If Jesus's words in Mark 14:9 are understood as a dominical prophecy about how this woman will be memorialized as the Gospel is preached, then the effect of Luke's excision is to render this prophecy false. Luke's two-volume story charts the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome and promises its reach "to the ends of the earth," ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς (Acts 1:8). Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world of Luke and Acts, it is never once associated with the female sign-prophet in Mark 14, the one who connected the ritual for anointing kings with the burial of Jesus and the one whom the Markan Jesus defends and acclaims.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Last Supper and the Exodus (22:7-13)*

Luke describes the Last Supper as a Passover meal, taking place during the Passover festival in Jerusalem. With respect to historical accuracy, this timing is questionable, as Marcie Lenk explains below.<sup>13</sup> But theologically, the association of Jesus with the Passover festival, including the symbolic association of Jesus with the Passover Lamb, is a central Christian claim. In dominant Christian teaching, the acclamation of Jesus as a Passover sacrifice has been affirmed on a spiritual plane—as God saved the children of Israel from slavery, so Jesus saves his followers from sin and death. Typically, this teaching has also been supersessionist—an argument for the superiority of Christ as the Passover lamb of a New Covenant, superior to the one God established with the Jews.

But insofar as the Passover festival commemorates the exodus, God's saving act to liberate Israelite slaves from Egypt, the association of Jesus's death with Passover has been a rich source of reflection for Christians concerned for justice, including feminists, womanists, and other liberation theologians. In these strands of Christianity, Jesus's crucifixion resonates more directly with exodus themes. Jesus's suffering is recognized as a "co-suffering," a sign of God's presence with the poor, the oppressed,

12. For the Matthean and Johannine versions of the episode, see Matt 26:6-13 and John 12:1-8.

13. See also Jonathan Klawans, "Was Jesus' Last Supper A Seder," *BR* 17 (2001): 24-33, 47.

and the enslaved in this world.<sup>14</sup> Recognizing Jesus's death as part of such an "exodus" story places emphasis on the wrongful nature of the crucifixion, rather than accepting it as a foreordained, divine necessity. Furthermore, it affirms that the crucifixion is not the last word but that God ultimately wills the defeat of oppressive powers. To see exodus themes in the Last Supper narrative is to proclaim that the same God who heard the cry of the slaves in Egypt and who sent Moses to demand that Pharaoh "Let my people go" also hears the cries of other suffering peoples and works in the world for their salvation. This work continues to be carried on by Jesus's followers as they engage in action aimed at liberating "crucified" peoples in today's world.<sup>15</sup>

### *A Christian Seder?*

The last decades have seen growth in the popularity of church-based celebrations of the Passover seder, as a reenactment of Jesus's Last Supper and a celebration of positive relations between Christians and Jews. The Passover seder ("order") is a ritual meal celebrated in Jewish homes on the first night

of Passover focused on the story of the Israelites enslaved and set free (Exod 1–15). Around the dinner table the story is told and discussed. Various foods are raised as symbols of that story: *matzah* (unleavened bread), *maror* (bitter herbs), and *pesah* (a bone representing the paschal lamb). With a text structured around four cups of wine participants

14. On Christ as "divine co-sufferer," see Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1989), 212–14, along with the critical analysis of JoAnne Marie Terrell, *Power in the Blood? The Cross in African American Experience* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 108–10. See also the several essays in *The Passion of the Lord: African American Reflections*, ed. James A. Noel and Matthew V. Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005); James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 149–51; Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993); Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, 111–19.

15. Jon Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy: Taking the Crucified People from the Cross* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994). See also Hye Kyung Heo, *The Liberative Cross: Korean–North American Women and the Self-Giving God* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), who roots her theology of the cross in a social trinitarian approach, wherein self-giving love can become liberative.

join together in songs and prayers praising God. While the connection to the Last Supper is almost irresistible, many Jews object to the Christian practice of seder as mistaken at best and cultural appropriation at worst.

Was the Last Supper a Passover seder? While Luke and the other Synoptic Gospels identify the Last Supper as a Passover meal (Luke 22; Matt 26; Mark 14), in John the gathering takes place before the festival of Passover (John 13). All of the canonical Gospels connect Jesus's death to Passover, but John identifies Jesus with the paschal lamb (John 1:29), noting that Jesus was killed on "the day of the Preparation for the Passover" (John 19:14), when the paschal lambs would have been slaughtered for the Passover feast. The connection was already known by Paul, who wrote that "our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7). If Jesus was crucified during the Passover preparations, the Last Supper could not have been a Passover meal. Even according to the Synoptics, where the apostles gather in Jerusalem for the Passover meal, there is reason to question whether that meal should be called a seder. While the ancient Israelites and the Jews of Jesus's time certainly gathered for a Passover feast (Exod 12:1-20; Deut 16:1-8) where

they would have slaughtered and roasted a paschal lamb and eaten it in groups accompanied by *matzah*, bitter herbs, and wine, recalling the exodus story and praising God (Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.48), the idea of a seder—a fixed order and ritual for the meal—is known only in the early third century CE in the *Mishnah* (m. Pesah. 10), a collection of rabbinic laws and traditions. Only in this text is there a reference to an organized ritual including specific symbolic elements, scriptural readings, and instructions of when to drink each of the four cups of wine that provide the structure for the ritual. The seder was likely developed after the temple was destroyed in 70 CE as a replacement and remembrance of the pilgrimage celebration in Jerusalem, giving Jews a meaningful way to continue to celebrate Passover after they no longer had access to Jerusalem. Applying the rabbinic liturgy and ritual to the memory of the Last Supper is an anachronism.

Cultural appropriation is a more serious challenge to Christians hoping to celebrate a Christian Passover seder. Cultural appropriation is "the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture."<sup>16</sup> For

16. Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. "cultural appropriation," <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cultural-appropriation>.

much of the last two thousand years, the relationship between Christians and Jews was far from a relationship of understanding or respect. Even when Jews were not persecuted by Christians, Judaism was often seen as being superseded by Christianity.

Even today, when Jewish-Christian relations have improved in almost every way, often Christians who learn about Judaism focus only on the Jewish background of Jesus, learning little if anything about the Judaism that survived and thrived since Jesus's time. For Jews, the Passover seder has been

an opportunity to engage with the exodus story and its themes of servitude and freedom in order to reflect on what it means to be a Jew today. Christian seders tend to ignore the meaning of Passover for Jews in order to interpret its symbols christologically. The Passover seder provides a wonderful opportunity for Christians to learn more about Judaism. Yet, turning that ritual into a Christian practice is neither respectful to Jews nor a historical reflection of the Jewish Jesus's own experience at the Last Supper.

Marcie Lenk

## Sharing the Cup, the Bread (and the Cup?) (22:14-23)

Feminists and womanists have long decried substitutionary atonement theologies that stress the necessity of Jesus's death as an expiation for human sin. Their overarching critique is that celebrating Jesus's death as a sacrifice, one that should be emulated by those who are powerless, is a means of inculcating docility and submission among such persons.<sup>17</sup> Further, they reject the notion of a God who would demand such suffering. Womanist theologian Delores Williams, who has identified surrogacy as the structure of domination operative in the lives of many Black women, has critiqued traditional atonement theories as sacralizing such surrogacy.<sup>18</sup> Asian American feminist Rita Nakashima Brock has famously

17. See further the excursus, "The Cross That Should Not Be Taken Up," in Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1-9*, 285-86; Barbara E. Reid, *Taking Up the Cross: New Testament Interpretations through Latina and Feminist Eyes* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), esp. 87-121; Barbara E. Reid, *Reconsiderar la Cruz. Interpretación latinoamericana y feminista del Nuevo Testamento*, Aletheia (Estella, Navarra: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2009), 153-207; Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018), 1-28.

18. Delores S. Williams, "Black Women's Surrogate Experience and Christian Notions of Redemption," in *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions*,

## Luke 22:14–23

<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup>for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup>Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks,

he broke it and gave it to them, saying “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup>And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup>But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. <sup>22</sup>For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” <sup>23</sup>Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

argued that the logic behind substitutionary atonement could be likened to “divine child abuse.”<sup>19</sup> This important conversation continues, with some recent progressive scholarship recognizing multivalence with respect to Christian claims that Jesus’s death was somehow a sacrifice, death for the sake of others. While decrying the notion that suffering *in and of itself* is redemptive, several recent arguments posit that suffering such as Jesus’s can be meaningful, when undertaken in solidarity with the suffering of others.<sup>20</sup>

The Last Supper in Luke offers a resource for those who wish to reflect on the meaning of Jesus’s death, apart from explicit reflection on expiatory sacrifice. In Luke, Jesus begins the supper not with the familiar language of bread as body “broken for you” and cup as blood “shed for you.” Instead, upon giving thanks, Jesus offers the first cup simply with

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ed. Paula Cooley, William R. Eakin, and Jay B. McDaniel (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 1–13.

19. Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Crossroad, 1988).

20. See Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 284–86. See also Terrell, *Power in the Blood?*; Marit Trelstad, ed., *Cross Examinations: Readings on the Meaning of the Cross Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006); M. Shawn Copeland, “To Live at the Disposal of the Cross: Mystical-Political Discipleship as Christological Locus,” in *Christology: Memory, Inquiry, Practice*, ed. Anne M. Clifford and Anthony Godzieba (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 177–96; M. Shawn Copeland, *Knowing Christ Crucified: The Witness of African American Religious Experience* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018); Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*.

the instruction “take this and divide it among yourselves,” in anticipation of the coming of the *basileia* of God. Rather than focusing on a sacrificed body, this invitation to share a cup with a circle of companions in anticipation of the eschatological banquet promotes community, shared experience of the divine, and hopeful expectation of a better future, “encouraged by the symbolic, strengthening, and festive force of the wine.”<sup>21</sup>

Certain ancient manuscript traditions of this Lukan pericope contain only this first shared cup, along with bread, and lack the sacrificial language of blood shed and body broken altogether.<sup>22</sup> Consider the NRSV, which relies on the dominant textual witnesses to produce a longer and more familiar version of the Last Supper, against this ancient abbreviated version of the supper:

Luke 22:17-20 (NRSV)	Luke 22:17-20 (based on Codex D)
<p><sup>17</sup>Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said,  “Take this and divide it among yourselves;  <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”  <sup>19</sup>Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying,  “<b>This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.</b>”  <sup>20</sup><b>And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying,</b>  “<b>This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.</b>”</p>	<p><sup>17</sup>Then he took the cup, and after giving thanks he said,  “Take this, divide it among yourselves;  <sup>18</sup>for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”  <sup>19</sup>And taking bread, giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying,  “<b>This is my body.</b>”</p>

21. Bovon, *Luke*, 3:157.

22. The earliest manuscript lacking v. 20 is Codex D, which is often regarded as less reliable than the two major uncials that do include the verse, Codex Sinaiticus (ⲛ) and Codex Vaticanus (B). Debates about which manuscript tradition better represents the earliest version of Luke are long and ongoing. In the twenty-fifth edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, vv. 19b-20 were included in double brackets, signaling a likely interpolation. But more recent critical editions have treated the longer version as original.

One good explanation for the discrepancy between these two manuscript traditions is that the shorter version of the supper is original to Luke and does not contain a reference to the cup as Jesus's blood because Luke avoids interpreting Jesus's death as atoning.<sup>23</sup> In subsequent early Christian arguments, when emphasis on Jesus's flesh and blood become increasingly important, language similar to 1 Corinthians 11:25b was added to Luke to bring this Gospel into conformity with this emphasis.<sup>24</sup>

Whether the shorter version of the Last Supper was original to Luke or not, the fact that manuscripts circulated containing only the first cup, without reference to body broken and blood shed "for you," shows that some early Christian texts commemorated the Last Supper without emphasizing Jesus's death as a sacrificial atonement. Thus, feminist and womanist critics of atonement theologies are able to position themselves in a very ancient line of Christian forebears, who reflected on the meaning of the meal commemorating Jesus's death in alternate ways.

#### *From Cup to Chalice*<sup>25</sup>

The Roman Missal for Roman Catholic liturgical use was revised in 2011, making a number of changes in its translation of biblical texts. One was the substitution of "chalice" for "cup" in the words of institution. In all the gospel accounts of the Last Supper, the word is ποτήριον, the term for an ordinary drinking cup. The new wording is based on the Vulgate's use of the Latin word *calix*, "chalice," which denotes a large ceremonial vessel.

There is more at stake in this new rendering than simply the kind of vessel "chalice" implies. Jesus's drinking of the cup is part of the Passover ritual. As John R. Donahue points out,

To call this cup a "chalice" disguises the relation of the Christian Eucharist to an *anamnesis* (enacted memorial) of the Paschal Meal celebrated by the Jewish Jesus as he approached his suffering and death. The events surrounding the Passion

23. Consider also how Luke modifies the saying concerning greatness and service (Mark 10:41-45 // Luke 22:24-27). While Mark concludes by saying the Son of Man came "to give his life a ransom for many" (v. 45), Luke omits this phrase.

24. As proposed by Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 198–211. See also the discussion of D. C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 151–57.

25. Adapted from Barbara E. Reid, "Liturgy and the Bible," in *Worship and Church: An Ecclesial Liturgy; Essays in Honor of Gerard Austin, OP*, ed. Sallie Katkovich and Peter C. Phan (New York: Paulist Press, 2019), 3–21, here 13–15. Used with permission.



of Jesus have caused great difficulties and sorrow in Jewish-Christian relations. The suppression of the memory of the Jewishness of Jesus in the Christian Eucharist is another example of “de-Judaizing” Jesus, and will erect another barrier to appreciation of our Jewish heritage, to mutual understanding, and to a proper liturgical catechesis.<sup>26</sup>

Another unfortunate consequence is that the image of Jesus using a “chalice” distances him from his disciples and contemporary worshipers as he uses, not a common drinking cup, but a vessel more proper to kings and priests. No longer does the text convey a message that the divine may be found in *lo cotidiano*, the ordinary stuff of everyday life. Not only that, important resonances with meanings of “cup” in other parts of Scripture<sup>27</sup> are lost. In Psalm 23:5, “my cup [כוס] overflows,” evokes God’s largess in caring for and providing for the ones

s/he shepherds. Likewise, when Psalm 16:5 speaks of God as “my allotted portion and my cup,” it connotes the abundance of life. Psalm 116:13 speaks of “the cup of salvation,” an offering made in thanksgiving for all the good God has bestowed. Jeremiah 16:7 refers to the “cup of consolation” offered to mourners. There are also a number of references to cup where it has the sense of an ominous destiny, as in the “cup of wrath” (Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15) or “the cup of staggering” (Isa 51:22). The connotation of ominous destiny is what is evident in Jesus’s plea in Gethsemane to the Father to let the cup pass him by (see Mark 14:36; Matt 2:39; Luke 22:42; cf. John 18:11). This is also the sense of “cup” in Mark 10:38-39, where Jesus responds to James and John’s request to sit at his right and left, “Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” These rich theological overtones are lost when “cup” becomes “chalice.”

## Legitimizing the Twelve for Exclusive Rule (22:24-34)

Luke culls and modifies sayings that are sprinkled throughout Mark and Q and clusters them here to create a farewell address for Jesus after the meal. The farewell address is a widely utilized literary form in the ancient world. Through its employment, Luke models Jesus’s approaching

26. John R. Donahue, “Cup or Chalice? The Large Implications of a Small Change,” *Commonweal* (May 21, 2012), <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/cup-or-chalice>.

27. See Harry Hagan, “Cup,” in *Collegeville Pastoral Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Carroll Stuhlmueller (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 192–93.

## Luke 22:24-34

<sup>24</sup>A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup>But he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup>But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest,

and the leader like one who serves. <sup>27</sup>For who is greater, the one who is at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

<sup>28</sup>“You are those who have stood by me in my trials; <sup>29</sup>and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on

death on the examples of the Maccabean patriarch Mattathias (1 Macc 2:49-70), the great king David (1 Kgs 2:1-10), and the great philosopher Socrates himself.<sup>28</sup>

A chief concern in both the Greco-Roman and biblical farewell address is the establishment of successors who will guarantee continuity between the teachings of the great king/philosopher and the movement gathered in his name. In Luke’s hands, the legitimate successors are the twelve male apostles led by Peter (with an eventual substitute for Judas among the Twelve; see Acts 1:15-26). This concern governs Luke’s redaction of sayings concerning greatness, ruling, and judging (vv. 24-30) and Luke’s proleptic defense of the disciples and Peter before their trials (vv. 28, 31-32).

*The Apostles as “Servants,” Kings, and Judges (22:24-30)*

The sayings concerning greatness in the Synoptic Gospels, which most often include exhortations to assume positions of humility and service,<sup>29</sup> have been received with caution, if not outright suspicion, by feminists reflecting on persons without ecclesiastical or societal power. If humility and service are held up as ideal postures for those who are already locked into positions of service for a ruling class, then the status quo is upheld,

28. William S. Kurz, “Luke 22:14-38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses,” *JBL* 104 (1985): 251–68. Kurz acknowledges resonance between this pericope and the farewell address in the tradition of Plato’s *Phaedo*, while arguing that the biblical examples of the form are closer analogies.

29. See, for instance, Mark 10:15 // Matt 19:13-15 // Luke 18:15-17; Mark 10:42-45 // Matt 20:26-27 // Luke 22:24-27; Mark 9:33-37 // Matt 18:1-4 // Luke 9:48; Matt 23:8-11.

me, a kingdom,<sup>30</sup> so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>31</sup>“Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat,<sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when

once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”<sup>33</sup> And he said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!”<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.”

and the lowly are sent empty away. Read in this way, the teachings do nothing to alleviate systemic injustice.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, the sayings may serve as resources in struggles toward justice. When directed toward those who already hold power over others, they might be interpreted as a call to renounce that power and engage in solidarity from below. As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza notes, the most radical forms of the paradoxical gospel sayings on power, including Mark 10:42-44,

seek to level [the kyriarchal pyramid] by calling those on the top of the pyramid to join the work and labor of those on the bottom, thereby making a “servant class” of people superfluous. By denying the validity of master and lord positions and by ironically calling the “would-be” great and leaders to live on the bottom of the kyriarchal pyramid of domination, this Jesus-tradition paradoxically rejects all kyriarchal-hierarchical structures and positions.<sup>31</sup>

It is common to point to Luke 22:25b-26 as a critique of ruling powers and an invitation to servanthood that is similar to Mark’s.<sup>32</sup> And taken in isolation, within certain contexts, Luke 22:25b-26 can be a powerfully

30. Womanist and feminist challenges to the reification of “servanthood” among those already vulnerable closely align with challenges articulated concerning sacrifice. See notes 17, 18, and 19 in this chapter for entry points into this bibliography.

31. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “‘Waiting at Table’: A Critical Feminist The\*logical Reflection on Diakonia,” in *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 213–22, esp. 220. See also *In Memory of Her*, 145–51.

32. See, for instance, Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 89–90, 99–100, 105, 160, 192; Caryn A. Reeder, *Gendering War and Peace in the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 30–31, 71, 202, 209.

liberative saying. Luke’s modification of Mark 10:42-43 in his farewell discourse at Luke 22:25-26, however, diminishes the potential for reading the saying in the direction of solidarity from below. Consider the sayings side by side:

<p>Mark 10:42b-44:          You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant [διάκονος], and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all [πάντων δοῦλος].</p>	<p>Luke 22:25b-26:          The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest [ὁ μείζων ἐν ὑμῖν γινέσθω ὡς ὁ νεώτερος], and the leader like one who serves [ὁ ἡγούμενος ὡς ὁ διακονῶν].</p>
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Both Mark and Luke stage this dominical saying concerning greatness and serving as an address to the Twelve to diffuse contentions about status. Yet, Mark’s version of the saying is more easily read as a check on ambition and a call to those with power and authority to embrace solidarity from below. Greatness and primacy are cast in adjectival form in Mark as something anyone might wish for—*whoever* wishes to be great; *whoever* wishes to be first. The Markan Jesus redirects those who desire greatness and primacy to assume, instead, the lowliest of social roles, that of servant (διάκονος) and slave of all (πάντων δοῦλος). Mark juxtaposes the nations, where rulers exercise authority over their subjects, and the followers of Jesus. Those who wish for greatness are called to abandon this aspiration and assume instead the social status that is the opposite of greatness. Thus, similar to the exhortation in Matthew 23:8-11 to call no one father or teacher, the Markan Jesus argues here for community with no ruling class or authority figures whatsoever.

Luke, in contrast, casts the power of the rulers of the nations more positively by marking them as “benefactors” (εὐεργέται). This term, which is distinctive to Luke among the gospel authors, is employed in cognate form in Acts to speak of the good deeds of Peter and John (εὐεργεσία, Acts 4:9) and of Jesus himself (εὐεργετέω, Acts 10:38).<sup>33</sup> In ancient elite

33. For study of the semantic field of benefaction, which includes numerous references to Lukan materials, see Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis, MO: Clayton, 1982).

discourse, benefactors are called not to become literal slaves but rather to understand themselves as metaphorical “servants to all” while retaining their positions of “authority over.”<sup>34</sup> Luke seems to adopt this perspective, speaking metaphorically and employing irony in these teachings pertaining to leadership and service, rather than calling literally for rulers to relinquish their “power over.”<sup>35</sup>

Consider the following: First, rather than a check on the possibility that anyone might assume the position of greatness they desire, Luke’s form of the saying is directed specifically to those already characterized as being great and exercising leadership and assumes that they will continue to rule (“the greatest among you must become . . . and the leader like . . .”). Second, while the call to be “one who serves” might theoretically be understood as assuming a subordinate posture, in the context of the Last Supper, as in developing discourse of church office in the late first and early second century, *diakonia* takes on a more honorific cast. Here, the example of Jesus “serving” pertains to his actions as host of the meal, presiding at table. His distribution of the bread and cup come to be understood in early Christianity as the actions of those assuming priestly function (contrast the manner in which the Gospel of John depicts Jesus’s service at supper more explicitly as “slave service” by having him disrobe and wash feet, John 13:4-5).<sup>36</sup>

34. Danker’s profile of benefactors includes terms for self-giving and service, *Benefactor*, 317–39. See also sources cited in David J. Lull, “The Servant-Benefactor as Model of Greatness (Luke 22:24-30),” *NovT* 28 (1986): 289–305, at 296–97. Consider Dio *Or.* 3.73-75, where a good monarch, likened to the sun, is said to endure a most strenuous form of slavery (δουλείαν δουλεύειν . . . πάνυ ισχυράν), and Philo’s reflections on Joseph, where it is argued that a good statesman is like a slave being sold to a multitude of masters (*Jos.* 36). For the increasing use of slavery as a metaphor by elite authors reflecting on their own experience under Roman imperial rule, see Sandra R. Joshel, “Slavery and Roman Literary Culture,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 1: *The Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 214–40, esp. 226–34.

35. Joseph Fitzmyer cautions that Jesus’s words here “are not to be understood in an egalitarian sense, which would be an unrealistic interpretation of them.” *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV*, AB 28A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1417. See excursus on “Nonhierarchical Models of Leadership” in Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 226–27.

36. See excursus “Women and Waiting at Table” in Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 281–83. On the wide range of meanings for the *diakonia* and cognates, see Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 155–58, and comments at 10:38-42, pp. 13–17 in this volume. In the same way that *diakonia* comes to designate a leadership role in developing

Finally, the clearest check on the Lukan saying concerning greatness, so that it not be read as a call for the powerful to relinquish their authority in exchange for a life of solidarity with those at the bottommost rungs of social status, is the integration of Luke 22:24-27 with Luke 22:28-30.<sup>37</sup> From a saying linking greatness to service, Luke shifts directly to conferring a kingdom upon the apostles (v. 29, *κἀγὼ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου βασιλείαν*). Within the kingdom, the apostles are to anticipate highest honors and highest authority, with places at table with the Lord and thrones from which they might rule over the twelve tribes of Israel.

This promise of special places at table in a kingdom conferred by Jesus bears resemblance to Jewish wisdom and apocalyptic traditions of a reversal of fortune in the end times, when the suffering righteous assume the status of rulers and judges.<sup>38</sup> Consider, for instance, the Wisdom of Solomon 3:8, which promises that, at the time of their visitation, the suffering righteous will “govern nations and rule over peoples,” or Paul’s declaration that the saints in Corinth will judge the world and even the angels (1 Cor 6:2-3). The conferral of the kingdom by Jesus in Luke 22, however, stands apart from this more inclusive strand of tradition concerning the final reward of the suffering righteous, because the reward is not granted to all who suffer. In Luke’s narration of the final meal, in which establishing successors is paramount, the privileged places at table and on thrones in the kingdom are reserved exclusively for the male apostles.<sup>39</sup>

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ecclesial circles, it has also been suggested that the *νεώτερος* might designate a special group in later New Testament literature (Acts 5:6; 1 Tim 5:1; Titus 2:6; 1 Pet 5:5). See G. Schneider, *EWNT* 2.1138.

37. For treatments of Luke 22:27-30 as a cohesive literary unit, see Michael Wolter, *Das Lukas-evangelium*, HNT 5 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 24–30; Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV*, 1411–19; Peter K. Nelson, “The Unitary Character of Luke 22:24-30,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 609–19.

38. The emphasis specifically on thrones for the Twelve leads many to believe that Daniel 7 and Psalm 122 are intertexts for Luke 22:30 (// Matt 19:28). See, for example, Craig A. Evans, “The Twelve Thrones of Israel: Scripture and Politics in Luke 22:24-30,” in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke–Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 154–70.

39. The exclusivity of the promised reward for Jesus’s legitimate successors calls into question Wolter’s argument that, for Luke, the saying advocates for a “Top-down-Inversion von Status und Rolle” (*Lukas-evangelium*, 712–13), and Bovon’s note that the sayings in vv. 28-29 are an instance where “the humblest will rule and judge Israel” (*Luke*, 3:174).

## TRANSLATION MATTERS

The Lukan Jesus's teaching on Gentile benefactors contains an elliptical phrase at verse 26a, ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, "but you not thus." Commonly, this phrase is understood to exhort the apostles *not* to be like Gentile benefactors and to signal a strong contrast between the way Gentiles rule and apostles should serve.<sup>40</sup> Alternately, it could be a criticism of the disciples for having fallen short with respect to benefaction. That is, "you should be more like Gentile benefactors." Such is the argument of David J. Lull, who reasons that because it is a commonplace in Greco-Roman discourse to link benefaction to service, the disciples are called to emulate, rather than to distinguish themselves from, benefactors here.<sup>41</sup> We find Lull's reading convincing, because a positive appraisal of benefaction here is consistent with Luke's other positive uses of the term and his overall acceptance of Roman social customs.

*The Proleptic Defense of the Disciples Who Will Flee and Deny*  
(22:28, 31-33)

The story of the moral failure of the male disciples at the time of Jesus's passion, preserved by Mark to devastating effect, posed a challenge to Luke in his efforts to legitimize the Twelve as Jesus's successors. According to Mark, the three leading disciples—Peter, James, and John—sleep rather than offer support while Jesus agonizes in the garden (Mark 14:32-42); all of the disciples flee at the time of the arrest (Mark 14:50); the gravity of Peter's denial is underscored by its placement precisely after the religious leaders spit and mock, and the military guard takes charge to beat Jesus (Mark 14:65-66); in comparison with the truth-telling slave girl, Peter comes off as a coward and a blasphemer, lying under oath (Mark 14:66-72).

Luke softens Mark's depiction of the male apostles as failing and cowardly by (a) providing rationale for their sleep (22:45); (b) omitting Mark's claim that the disciples deserted him after the arrest (Mark 14:50); (c) reorganizing the sequence of Peter's denial and the beatings, omitting

40. Wolter, *Das Lukas-evangelium*, 711-12; Bovon, *Luke*, 3:173; Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 89-90, 99-100, 105, 160, 192.

41. Lull, "The Servant-Benefactor," 289-305. Compare also the argument that the verb for exercising rule in v. 25, κυριεύειν, has been anachronistically translated as having negative connotation owing to modernist, anti-monarchical ideologies in Kenneth Willis Clark, "The Meaning of [κατα] κυριεύειν," in *The Gentile Bias and Other Essays*, NovTSup 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 207-12.

the false oath, and otherwise softening the nature of Peter's denial (22:61-65);<sup>42</sup> and (d) asserting that *all* of Jesus's acquaintances—not just the women—witnessed to, rather than fled from, the crucifixion (23:49). Before Luke narrates these instances of failure and cowardice in modified form, the author prepares readers to evaluate the apostles favorably by signaling that the failings are inconsequential to the legitimacy of their succession. He does so by employing the rhetorical device of *prolepsis*, the anticipation and answering of objections concerning the apostles' failure. Before the narratives of the garden, the arrest, and Peter's denial, Jesus makes an assertion that could be understood as contrary to fact by those who know the Gospel of Mark: "You are those who have stood by me in my trials" (τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου, v. 28a). Proleptic defense of a failed apostle accounts also for the Lukan Jesus's prayer on Peter's behalf, to which we now turn.

*Satan's Demand, Jesus's Prayer, Peter's Commission* (22:31-32)<sup>43</sup>

This exchange between Jesus and Peter, in which Jesus warns Peter of an impending attack from Satan, has no close parallel. As in the case of Job, Satan has enough standing to receive what he demands (v. 31; cf. Job 1:6-12). Jesus apparently cannot prevent the "sifting" (σινιάζω; for more on this term, see below), but he reassures Peter that he has prayed for him to withstand the trial.<sup>44</sup>

Those who regard Satan merely as an "adversary" or "accuser" understand Jesus to be referring to a heavenly court, where Satan is the prosecuting attorney and Jesus intercedes in Peter's defense.<sup>45</sup> But recent studies of ancient demonology clarify that Satan is no lawyer who comes into court armed only with rhetorical skills. Ancient judicial pro-

42. On Luke's rehabilitation of Peter, see Ann Graham Brock, *Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle: The Struggle for Authority*, HTS 51 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 20–40.

43. This section summarizes an argument made in Shelly Matthews, "'I Have Prayed for You . . . Strengthen Your Brothers' (Luke 22:32): Jesus's Proleptic Prayer for Peter and Other Gendered Tropes in Luke's War on Satan," in *Petitioners, Penitents, and Poets: On Prayer and Praying in Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Timothy J. Sandoval and Ariel Feldman, BZAW 524 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 231–46.

44. Peter's situation is analogous to the situation of Zechariah (Zech 3:1-7), with respect to Satanic attack, divine intervention, and divine commission. See Matthews, "Jesus's Proleptic Prayer."

45. Bovon, *Luke*, 3:178.



cedures, both imagined and actual, did not place high priority on bodily protections for the accused. Physical violence was constitutive of such procedures, making some trial settings more like torture chambers or battlefields than the modern courtroom.<sup>46</sup> Satan's role in judicial settings is that of executioner, rather than accuser.<sup>47</sup>

The verbs describing Satan's claim on Peter suggest Satan's desire to do bodily harm to Peter and the apostles.<sup>48</sup> The Greek verb ἐξαιτοῦμαι, which the NRSV translates "has demanded," means "to claim for oneself." When associated with Satan and the demonic, it denotes violence against the one claimed.<sup>49</sup> The verb σινιάζω, used only here in the New Testament, is correctly translated as "to sift, or filter," because it is associated with grain. The verb belongs within the same family of terms as σίνομαι/σίνοος, terms denoting violence, injury, ravishing, or pillaging.<sup>50</sup> Satan's "claiming the apostles for himself," in order to "sift" them, is a claim on their very lives.<sup>51</sup>

Jesus's prayer for Peter, followed by his commission to "strengthen the brothers," once again brings into view Luke's penchant for describing the struggle with Satan and the demons as a war requiring virile combatants. Peter does not yet have the superior strength needed to "bind the strong man" (see Luke 11:21-22; compare Acts 8:9-24). But he does have enough strength to withstand Satan's physical attack and to return, without his faith having failed him. Having proved his own strength qualifies him to strengthen the other male apostles. In this way, Peter's moral failure is recast as heroism deserving promotion in rank.

46. See, for instance, Brent Shaw, "Judicial Nightmares and Christian Memory," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 533-63.

47. Ryan E. Stokes, "Satan, YHWH's Executioner," *JBL* 133 (2014): 251-70; Ryan E. Stokes, *The Satan: How God's Executioner Became the Enemy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019).

48. The second-person verbs in vv. 31 and 32 alternate between plural (you apostles) and singular (you Peter).

49. BDAG cites at the entry for ἐξαιτέω Plutarch's *Moralia* 417D: "But as Heracles laid siege to Oechalia for the sake of a maiden, so powerful and impetuous divinities, in demanding a human soul [ἐξαιτούμενοι ψυχήν] which is incarnate within a mortal body . . . bring pestilences . . . until they succeed in obtaining what they desire" (Babbitt, LCL). Cf. also T. Benj. 3:3: "And if the spirits of Beliar demand you for themselves for every evil affliction [εἰς πᾶσαν πονηρίαν θλίψεως ἐξαιτήσονται ὑμᾶς]."

50. LSJ, s.v. "σίνομαι," "σίνοος."

51. That sinners are appropriately handed over to Satan for execution seems also to be the understanding of Paul in 1 Cor 5:5.

The sting of Luke's redactional choices in these passages lies especially in how these decisions come to serve as justification for kyriarchal church policies over the centuries.<sup>52</sup> Luke's arguments for exclusive succession of the twelve male apostles becomes justification, in spite of what we know of their failures from Mark, for continued exclusive male privilege for ordination into the clergy. The injustice of that exclusivity is masked by the disingenuous assertion that the privilege of the clergy is merely the privilege to "serve."

*Judy Chicago's  
The Dinner Party as an  
Antidote to the Last Supper  
of Jesus with Twelve Men*

To gather together around a table, as the Lukan Last Supper with its farewell address and commissioning of successors illustrates, is a significant act. For prominent men, it is a place of communion where decisions are made, ideas are exchanged, and blessings are given. Gatherings of women, on the other hand, are

often reduced to frivolous spaces for gossip and "girl talk."

*The Dinner Party* by American artist Judy Chicago (b. 1939) rejects this notion. Borrowing from art works like da Vinci's *Last Supper*, *The Dinner Party* was created between 1974 and 1979, composed mainly of a life-size triangular banquet table featuring thirty-nine individual place settings that include personalized plates, napkins, and table runners to represent thirty-nine women

52. The exclusive, androcentric nature of the Lukan commission of Peter has been sensed by Pope John Paul II, who justifies the exclusion of women from the priesthood on the basis of this verse, writing: "Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the church's divine constitution itself, *in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren* (cf. Luke 22,32), I declare that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the church's faithful" (Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone, §4 [1994]). For the full text: [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1994/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19940522\\_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19940522_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html). See also Peter De Mey, "Authority in the Church: The Appeal to Lk 22,21-34 in Roman Catholic Magisterial Teaching and in the Ecumenical Dialogue," in *Luke and His Readers: Festschrift A. Denaux*, ed. Reimund Bieringer, Gilbert Van Belle, and Joseph Verheyden, BETL 182 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 307–23, here 317 n. 49. Emphasis added.

whose biographies and influence at the time were buried and excluded from patriarchal tellings of history. Seated chronologically from prehistory to the Women's Revolution, some of the featured dinner guests include Hatshepsut, Hildegard of Bingen, Sojourner Truth, and Georgia O'Keeffe.<sup>53</sup> Beyond women from history, Chicago also finds her dinner guests from myth and legend such as the Primordial Goddess, the Amazons, and Judith.<sup>54</sup>

The table, combined with the dim lighting used in the gallery and the unabashedly yonic plate decorations, makes the space unmistakably powerful. In the presence of this work,

it is hard not to imagine what advice Sappho would have for Emily Dickinson<sup>55</sup> or what international diplomacy could look like if Theodora and Queen Elizabeth I were allies.<sup>56</sup> Viewers are left to decide where their own seat is at this elaborate table and how different this world would be if the convenings of influential women were essential and commonplace.

This artwork was no doubt revolutionary for its time and was considered scandalous and even pornographic by critics and public officials. After touring museums and galleries around the world, *The Dinner Party* eventually found a permanent home in the middle of the

53. Hatshepsut lived in the fifteenth century BCE and became queen of Egypt when she was approximately twelve years old, later becoming a pharaoh. At her own orders, she is depicted as male in statues and sculptures. The temple of Deir el-Bahri, where she is buried, is located in western Thebes and is a popular tourist attraction. Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) was a German writer, mystic, and abbess of a Benedictine monastery. She was a forerunner in what today is called feminist biblical interpretation and was known for her healing arts (see Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, xxv, 160–61). Isabella Baumfree, who adopted the name Sojourner Truth (ca. 1797–1883), was a former slave and prominent abolitionist (see Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, xxvi, 25–26). Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) was an American artist, often called the “mother of American modernism.”

54. In Greek mythology, the Amazons were a tribe of warrior women said to live in Asia Minor. Judith beheaded the Assyrian commander Holofernes, after which the Israelites routed the Assyrians and plundered their camp. Judith's story is told in the biblical book named for her.

55. Sappho (c. 630–c. 570 BCE) was a widely renowned Greek lyric poet. Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) was a prolific American poet.

56. Theodora (c. 497–548 CE), the wife of the emperor Justinian I (reigned 527–565), was the most powerful woman in Byzantine history. Elizabeth I (1533–1603) was queen of England from 1558–1603.

Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City.<sup>57</sup> The triangular gallery that houses this work is surrounded by yet another gallery space that allows for rotating exhibits to be viewed in conversation with *The Dinner Party*, in order to expand on and complicate Chicago's message of inclusion.

The biographies of Chicago's dinner guests were largely unknown at the time and her research was executed before Google and the internet were accessible tools. Chicago and her large team of assistants spent years locating and compiling information about the 1,038 women featured in the various components of her work. While the scope of this project is commendable, given the constraints of the 1970s, the women represented in this work are largely White women from the Western world and the yonic imagery that adorns each place setting, while powerful to some, ultimately equates womanhood with a strict understanding of biological sex. It is clear that despite the best of intentions, many people were not given a seat at Chicago's table.

In 2019 the Brooklyn Museum surrounded Chicago's work with the exhibit *Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years after Stonewall*. If Judy Chicago

created a different kind of dinner party, this exhibit featured a different kind of table blessing. Queer artist Mark Aguhar's (1987–2012) "Litanies to My Heavenly Brown Body" adorned a portion of the gallery like wallpaper with a blessing in capital letters for all those who find themselves excluded from mainstream social and political spaces as well as traditional religious canons.

Her litany reads:

"Blessed are the sissies  
 Blessed are the boi dykes  
 Blessed are the people of  
 color  
 My beloved kith and kin  
 Blessed are the trans  
 Blessed are the high femmes  
 Blessed are the sex workers  
 Blessed are the authentic  
 Blessed are the  
 dis-identifiers  
 Blessed are the gender  
 illusionists  
 Blessed are the  
 non-normative  
 Blessed are the  
 genderqueers  
 Blessed are the kinksters  
 Blessed are the disabled  
 Blessed are the hot fat girls  
 Blessed are the  
 weirdo-queers  
 Blessed is the spectrum  
 Blessed is consent  
 Blessed is respect  
 Blessed are the beloved  
 who I didn't

57. See [https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/easfa/dinner\\_party/home](https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/easfa/dinner_party/home).

describe, I couldn't  
describe, will learn  
To describe and respect and  
love  
Amen<sup>58</sup>

Chicago's work, as an antidote to the *Last Supper*, imagines a space where women who were written off or dismissed by patriarchal accounts of history can make themselves known. Aguhar builds off of

that imagining by declaring that feminism is not merely female and that female is not merely biological. It is Black and Brown. It is Indigenous and Undocumented, Queer and Disabled, together making a table for themselves at which to write their own history as they always have. May the rest of us step aside to unbury and uplift that work.

Alice Matthews



Chicago, *Judy* (b. 1939) ©ARS, NY. The Dinner Party installed in its permanent home at the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. 1979. Mixed media. 36 in. x 576 in. x 576 in. Photo: © Donald Woodman. Photo courtesy of Judy Chicago / Art Resource, NY.

58. Used with permission of Michael C. Aguhar.

### *Women Disciples in the Cinematic Imagination*

What if cinema can kindle our hermeneutical impulse so that we are able to imagine women disciples gathered around Jesus's table and walking shoulder to shoulder with men in Jesus's life during his active ministry? While a number of titles of the Jesus-film genre conform to the androcentric view of a favored male discipleship, a few have birthed thought-provoking imagery that portray women not simply as adjunct, behind-the-scenes characters but as visible and involved disciples who stand on the truth of who they are—bearers of a fuller, authentic humanity.

*Godspell* (directed by David Greene, USA, 1973), the film version of the eponymous Broadway musical on the life of Jesus re-set in contemporary New York City, challenges biblical conventions in its anachronistic recontextualization of the Gospel of Matthew in the hippie culture of the 1960s and 1970s. Jesus, an emblematic, countercultural clown figure, recruits a multiracial group of ordinary working people to join his ragtag team. Instead of twelve, he summons only nine to his inner circle of apostles, but what is truly novel is that five out of the nine are women. Outnumbering the men, women disciples in the film occupy a prominent place at Jesus's table and serve as coequal partners at every stage of his saving ministry.

Controversial when it was released for speculatively exploring, under poetic license, aspects of the human nature of the historical Jesus that the Gospels are silent about, *The Last Temptation of Christ* (directed by Martin Scorsese, USA, 1988) contributes to a more inclusive view of women in its imaginative Last Supper scene. Set in an undisclosed locale abuzz with ritual and activity, Jesus's Passover meal is seen first from a top view—the disciples are gathered around Jesus in a horseshoe sitting arrangement. As bread is broken and passed on from one disciple to another, the camera offers a closer view that reveals the presence of three women disciples sharing the meal; Mary Magdalene and the sisters Martha and Mary are seated alongside the male disciples. A notable departure from traditional, gender-biased representations, *The Last Temptation of Christ* depicts the women disciples as partakers of Jesus's meal, not invisible servants relegated to performing kitchen chores.

A truly compelling representation of women disciples is clearly seen in *Son of Man* (directed by Mark Dornford-May, South Africa, 2006), a critically acclaimed film that boldly inculturates the gospel story in an undisclosed, contemporary African context reeling in the turbulence of internecine war and abusive military rule. In a township identified only by the symbolic

name "Judea," a Black African Jesus emerges as wisdom figure and prophetic mouthpiece, denouncing corruption and violence while trumpeting social transformation and the *shalom* of God. An early scene is of interest: Jesus calls ordinary people to follow him, and in stylized manner, each of their names is spelled out across the screen in bold letters. The first set of disciples are predictably male, until Jesus calls three individuals whose male names literally and visibly change to female—Simon (the Zealot) becomes Simone, Philip becomes Philippa, and Thaddaeus becomes Thaddea. The sequence not only promotes the inclusion of three female disciples but does so in a deliberate manner that highlights the significance of the "correction," thus, elevating it to an ethical imperative. In the film's dramatic arc, the women disciples participate in Jesus's ministry as disciples who are integral to the unfolding of Jesus's mission. Referring again to the Last Supper scene, a rustic "Third World" rendering where Jesus and the disciples share a drink in common from an aluminum pail, the women are not huddled together in some reserved token niche but are interspersed among the men. It is noteworthy that Philippa occupies a privileged place; she is seated immediately next to Jesus on his left hand. Widening the aperture, the film's portrayal of Mary solidifies not just the inclusion but the

primacy of women disciples in Jesus's ministry. Here, the mother of Jesus is depicted as an inculturated African embodiment of the "Mary of the Magnificat" found in Luke 1:46-55, literally singing her prophetic, liberating canticle full voiced in the middle of her pregnancy amid the crossfire of male-dominated firepower. Later in the film, when the military attempts to disrupt the gathering of disciples at the foot of the cross, the male disciples recoil in fear, and it is Mary and the women disciples who frontline a defiant ritual song-and-dance to denounce and protest the politicized intrusion of the armed soldiers. The film suggests, in more ways than one, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the model of discipleship par excellence, an image that meaningfully resonates with feminist theologies and the Second Vatican Council.

Like new stained-glass windows, Jesus-films may contribute to the expansion of the field of imagination as they invite a mutually enriching intertextual dialogue with the Gospels, most especially with Luke, which includes more episodes featuring women than any other Gospel, as ambiguous as their portrait may be. The creative crossing between the cinematic and the biblical challenges established kyriarchical hierarchies, even as it offers a transformative vision of a church that truly embodies a discipleship of equals.

*Antonio D. Sison*

### Taking up Arms for the Hour (22:35-38)

The command to sell a cloak and buy a sword is hailed among advocates of private gun ownership in the United States as Jesus's support for the right to bear arms.<sup>59</sup> Alternately, scholars working from the premise that Jesus was a pacifist have argued that Jesus's exhortation to buy a sword is metaphorical, not literal.<sup>60</sup> But we do not read this command as a timeless principle for readers to take up arms. Nor do we understand it as a test, whereby Jesus speaks of metaphorical swords to see whether his disciples can grasp the deeper meaning of his true pacifism, only to become exasperated when they raise two actual swords in response.

The contrast between the time of mission (v. 35: "when I sent you out without purse, bag or sandals"; compare 9:3) and the present time when swords are required suggests that the command pertains only to the present and limited hour of crisis within the context of the passion narrative. That is, the time for bearing swords is the time inaugurated by Satan's entry into Judas (22:3), which makes possible the arrest and execution of Jesus (consider especially 22:53b, "this is your hour, and the power of darkness!"). Luke continues to see the struggle with Satan as a battle. Sometimes that battle is staged within bodies of the demon-possessed (see our comments in *Luke 1–9* at 8:26-39; 9:37-45, pp. 265–68, 289–91), but sometimes weapons of war and military combat on an earthly plane are evoked (see commentary above on Luke 11:21-22; 22:31). The call to exchange cloaks for weapons functions in this evocative way, underscoring the seriousness of what is to come. The two swords the disciples volunteer in response to Jesus's command may not be used in actual combat in this narrative scene. But they are the proper equipment to carry when Satan is present. Swords are a signal of the violence and death his presence unleashes.<sup>61</sup>

59. On the Gun Owners of America website, Luke 22:36 is glossed: "Keep in mind that the sword was the finest offensive weapon available to an individual soldier—the equivalent then of a military rifle today" (<https://gunowners.org/fs9902/>).

60. As one example of the reasoning that the swords in Luke 22:36 are metaphorical, see the annotation in the Oxford Annotated NRSV (1991), to 22:36: "An example of Jesus's fondness for striking metaphors . . . but the disciples take it literally. The *sword* apparently meant to Jesus a preparation to live by one's own resources against hostility. The natural meaning of v. 38 is that the disciples supposed he spoke of an actual sword, only to learn that two swords were sufficient for the whole enterprise, i.e., were not to be used at all" (p. 117 NT). For a summary of varying scholarly positions, see David Lertis Matson, "Double-Edged: The Meaning of the Two Swords in Luke 22:35-38," *JBL* 137 (2018): 463–80.

61. This is so, even if Jesus does not allow them to be drawn to resist his arrest. See commentary below on vv. 47-53. Compare also Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the*



## Luke 22:35-38

<sup>35</sup>He said to them, "When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "No, not a thing." <sup>36</sup>He said to them, "But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. <sup>37</sup>For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was counted among the lawless'; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled." <sup>38</sup>They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough."

### Prayer on the Mount of Olives (22:39-46)

Differently from the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus's emotional turmoil in Gethsemane is indicated by direct speech concerning his deep sorrow (*περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου*, Mark 14:34), his throwing himself upon the ground (Mark 14:35), and his repetition of the prayer for the cup to be removed (Mark 14:36, 39, 41), the Lukan Jesus comports himself on the Mount of Olives with restraint. He makes no direct confession of emotional anguish. He prays only once for the cup to be taken away (Luke 22:42), after assuming the more formal posture of kneeling, rather than lying prostrate. Exegetes have long accounted for Jesus's control over his emotions in the face of his impending death here, and up until his crucifixion, in terms of Luke's concern to sculpt Jesus in the mold of a philosopher, facing his death in the manner of Socrates.<sup>62</sup> This understanding is bolstered by the likelihood that verses 43 and 44, stressing Jesus's agony and his sweat like drops of blood, are a later interpolation added to counter the view that Jesus was as impassive in the face of death as the surrounding narrative suggests.<sup>63</sup>

Framed in terms of masculinity studies, we can say that the Lukan Jesus "performs a heightened masculinity";<sup>64</sup> in terms of empire studies,

*Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke's Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 50–57.

62. See, for example, Jerome Neyrey, "The Absence of Jesus' Emotion—The Lukan Redaction of Luke 22.39-46," *Bib* 61 (1980): 153–71; John Kloppenborg, "Exitus clari viri: The Death of Jesus in Luke," *TJT* 8 (1992): 106–20; Greg Sterling, "Mors Philosophi: The Death of Jesus in Luke," *HTR* 94 (2001): 383–402.

63. For the argument that vv. 33-34 are an interpolation to combat the view, circulating in early Christianity, that Jesus did not truly suffer, see Bart D. Ehrman and Mark A. Blunkett, "The Angel and the Agony: The Textual Problem of Luke 22:43-44," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 401–16. The NRSV translation signals the likelihood of interpolation by adding textual brackets around these verses.

64. For the contrasting view, that the Lukan Jesus's comportment in Gethsemane does not reflect Roman ideals of masculinity, see Brittany Wilson, *Unmanly Men:*

## Luke 22:39–46

<sup>39</sup>He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>When he reached the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.” <sup>41</sup>Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, <sup>42</sup>“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.” [<sup>43</sup>Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. <sup>44</sup>In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down on the ground.] <sup>45</sup>When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

we can compare Jesus’s self-control to the superior comportment of the emperor, which is like that of a god. Luke’s Jesus, like the Johannine Jesus, is utterly in control of the events of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

### Jesus’s Self-Mastery in Satan’s Hour (22:47–53)

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus involve violence against a vulnerable bystander, a slave of the high priest who loses an ear to the sword of one of Jesus’s companions. The NRSV translates Jesus’s words after the ear-slicing, *ἔατε ἕως τούτου*, as “No more of this!” This elliptical phrase is commonly understood as an expression of pacificism, Jesus’s rebuke of the disciples for engaging in violence. But while the Gospel of Matthew clearly does use the attack on the slave as an opportunity for a general aphorism on nonviolence (Matt 26:52: “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword”), reading that same type of pacifism into Luke requires a misleading translation. The phrase *ἔατε ἕως τούτου* is better translated as “permit unto this” or “allow this to happen.”<sup>65</sup> Translated in this way, Jesus’s words are an answer the disciple’s question, “should we strike with the sword?” (v.

*Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke–Acts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 219–22.

65. In an essay illuminating how our own social location informs our interpretation of Scripture, David Lertis Matson (“Pacifist Jesus? The [Mis]Translation of *ἔατε ἕως τούτου* in Luke 22:51,” *JBL* 134 [2015]: 157–76) traces how the RSV translation committee introduced the phrase “no more of this!” for *ἔατε ἕως τούτου* in 1940, on the cusp of the US entry into World War II, likely influenced by increasing pacifism within mainline North American Protestantism.

## Luke 22:47-53

<sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; <sup>48</sup>but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?" <sup>49</sup>When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" <sup>50</sup>Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup>But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. <sup>52</sup>Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? <sup>53</sup>When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!"

49). Jesus's response can be paraphrased, "Do not attempt to resist the arrest by drawing swords, but allow the arrest to proceed."

A theology of divine determinism pervades the Gospel of Luke, and Jesus is depicted as having full knowledge of that plan.<sup>66</sup> It is necessary (δεῖ) that Jesus suffer (9:22). His departure or "exodus" (τὴν ἔξοδον) must be fulfilled (πληροῦν) in Jerusalem (9:31). His death has been ordained (ὀρίζω, 22:22). It has taken place "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" (τῆ ὀρισμένη βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ, Acts 2:23). Satan's entrance into Judas and his plotting with the leadership is the immediate cause of the arrest in the garden. But insofar as Jesus allows for the arrest to proceed, and consigns it specifically to this "hour," he demonstrates that Satan's time is allotted only as part of the plan. God is in ultimate control of Jesus's fate, and Satan's actions are constrained within a defined and limited space. The healing of the ear of the slave (v. 51), mentioned only in Luke, is another testimony to Jesus's superior strength and his control of the situation. This arrest is not to be resisted. No one should be distracted by clashes on the side. Before the spilling of the slave's blood can lead to further shows of violence, Jesus brings the skirmish to a halt.

### The Truth-Telling Female Slave (22:54-62)

We have taken up questions of Peter's moral failure and Luke's efforts at rehabilitating his favored apostle in our discussion of verses 28-34

66. See further comments on God's will and Jesus's obedience in the concluding remarks for this chapter: "Historical and Theological Problems."

## Luke 22:54–62

<sup>54</sup>Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. <sup>55</sup>When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. <sup>56</sup>Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." <sup>57</sup>But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." <sup>58</sup>A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am

not!" <sup>59</sup>Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup>But Peter said, "Man I do not know what you are talking about!" At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. <sup>61</sup>The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." <sup>62</sup>And he went out and wept bitterly.

above. Here we focus on the woman who first assesses Peter's identity and provokes his first denial of Jesus.

Teasing out the agency of female slaves in androcentric narratives is challenging. They seldom appear in ancient texts, and when they do appear they are typically playing the roles of liars, fools, or nymphomaniacs.<sup>67</sup> The Gospel of Mark is a striking exception, in its staging of Peter's denial of Jesus (Mark 14:66–72). There we are introduced to the female slave (παιδίσκη, NRSV: "servant-girl") who belongs to the high priest, in a verse that functions as a transition from the torture of Jesus to Peter's failure to acknowledge him (Mark 14:66). Twice she is given the role of recognizing and scrutinizing Peter (Mark 14:67: ἰδοῦσα, ἐμβλέψασα, and Mark 14:69: ἰδοῦσα) and then speaking about his identity. Twice in Mark, if not in all three instances, she may be credited as the one who provokes the denial. Peter's first claim of ignorance concerning Jesus is prompted by the female slave's encounter, in which she confronts him directly; the second follows on her agency in alerting those gathered round (τοῖς παρεστῶσιν) of his identity; the third denial is prompted by the bystanders (οἱ παρεστῶτες) to whom she had previously spoken.

67. For discussion of slave girls as stock characters in ancient Greek and Roman literature, see, for instance, Margaret Aymer, "Outrageous, Audacious, Courageous, Willful: Reading the Enslaved Girl of Acts 12," in *Womanist Interpretations of the Bible: Expanding the Discourse*, ed. Gay L. Byron and Vanessa Lovelace, SemeiaSt 85 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 265–89, esp. 271–73.

As we now have come to expect, Luke modifies the story by diminishing the agency Mark has credited to the slave. The number of words devoted to the female slave is cropped. She looks and accuses only once. Her accusation, followed by Peter's denial addressed in the vocative, "Woman, I do not know him," is balanced by a second accusation and denial by another interlocutor, this one a male to whom Peter responds, "Man, I am not!" The third denial involves an encounter with another male accuser (Luke 23:56-60). These are small details in a short narrative of a slave that might be easily overlooked. But as Margaret Aymer reminds us in her explication of the story of the slave girl Rhoda in Acts 12, "Womanist biblical hermeneutics requires that African American women's stories matter." She continues by noting that because these stories have included enslaved girls, then slave girls in biblical texts must also matter, must also be taken seriously.<sup>68</sup> Inspired by Aymer's charge, we call attention to these small details and the richer story Luke hopes to eliminate from the tradition. Behind his cropped version of a female slave's agency, we see the more remarkable story that Mark has told: a story in which Peter is faced down by a courageous female slave, who defies the stereotype of the mendacious slave and persists in truth-telling in the face of his untruths.



Il Rinneamento di Pietro ("The Denial of Peter") from the Basilica di Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, property of the Opera di Religione della Diocesi di Ravenna. Used with permission.

68. Aymer, "Outrageous," 265.

**Mocked and Condemned before the Council (22:63-71)***Historical and Theological Problems*

Luke needs to answer for Theophilus why, if Jesus is the Son of God, he was crucified as a common criminal. As we have noted above (see commentary on 22:47-53), his overarching solution to this problem is to assert a strong theological determinism. Jesus is arrested, tried, and ultimately crucified because this was God's plan for him all along. Furthermore, to shore up the security of his own group under empire, Luke needs to identify the villains in this death without pointing his finger squarely at the Roman authorities in whose power the state punishment of crucifixion lay.

Both of these solutions that come to the fore in chapter 22 are problematic from a feminist perspective. To say that God willed the death of Jesus makes God into a sadistic and deplorable "Father," who turns a deaf ear to the pleas of his suffering son while he begs him to "remove this cup" (22:42). Such an image of God can enable justification of child abuse by human parents. Some Christians who try to reconcile a loving deity with the divine willing of Jesus's death explain that God knew the greater good for humankind that would result and so willed the death of the beloved son. This kind of thinking can lead to an attitude that some lives are expendable, an attitude contradicted by the Lukan Jesus whose desire for a saving well-being encompasses all.

Moreover, to see Jesus's death as God's will that Jesus had no option to oppose is to miss Luke's equally strong portrait of Jesus throughout the Gospel as a rejected prophet<sup>69</sup> whose choices to lift up the humiliated and bring down the powerful (1:52) are what lead to his execution. This theological explanation for the death of Jesus gives hope to those who are most vulnerable in our day as well and impels followers of Jesus to emulate his choices, knowing the possible cost. With his insistence in each of the scenes in the passion that the outcome was predetermined—whether in the last meal (v. 22), concerning Peter's trial and return (v. 32), concerning the purchase of swords (v. 37), in the prayer on the Mount of Olives (v. 47), in the arrest (v. 51)—Luke attempts, after the fact of Jesus's crucifixion, to answer questions about God's justice and love in light of Jesus's tragic fate. While rejecting theological assertions that God willed for Jesus to die, feminists find fruitful ground for reflection in the Lukan

69. See comments at 4:16-30 in Reid and Matthews, *Luke 1–9*, 131, 144–45.

## Luke 22:63-71

<sup>63</sup>Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; <sup>64</sup>they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" <sup>65</sup>They kept heaping many other insults on him.

<sup>66</sup>When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council.

<sup>67</sup>They said, "If you are the Messiah,

tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; <sup>68</sup>and if I question you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup>But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." <sup>70</sup>All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." <sup>71</sup>Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"

affirmation that Jesus's suffering and death do not occur outside God's saving will and power.

Equally problematic is the claim that Jesus's arrest is the result of a Satanic plot by authorities in Jerusalem (vv. 2-4), who assemble as a large body to condemn Jesus (vv. 66-71), because it feeds into the long-standing anti-Jewish assertion that "the Jews" killed Jesus. Aside from this claim that Judas and these authorities are under the grip of Satan, readers should recognize several additional details here as failing the test of historical plausibility. It is not historically credible that such a large body of Jerusalemites—elders, chief priests, scribes, and their council<sup>70</sup>—had a vested interest in the death of this Galilean prophet. Furthermore, it is historically unlikely that so large a body of Jewish authorities would gather during the Passover festival to hold a capital trial.<sup>71</sup> Finally, even if Jesus had claimed to be the Son of Man, the Messiah, and/or the Son of God (and note that in Luke he defers from answering an identity question altogether; compare Mark 14:62), Judeans of the first century did

70. Mark stages this trial before "the whole *council*" (συνέδριον, Mark 15:1), as if to refer to a formal national body representing Judean self-government. Luke refers to "their council," which implies a less representative body. Thus, David Goodblatt ("The Sanhedrin," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, 2nd ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 2017], 602–4) suggests that Luke 22:66 be translated, "they brought him into their meeting/session."

71. As Jonathan Klawans has pointed out, holding a trial and execution during Passover would be unseemly, if not forbidden (m. Sanh. 4.2 forbids holding a capital trial on the eve of a festival). See Klawans, "Was Jesus' Last Supper a Seder?" 24–33, 47.

not turn messianic pretenders over to Roman authorities to be punished for the religious “crime” of blasphemy.

Not all Jews in the Galilee and Judea became followers of Jesus. Some would surely have disagreed with him, and sometimes that disagreement may have been vehement. In these contexts of religious disagreement, Jesus may have faced “the buffeting of strong words, the batterings of skillfully aimed proof texts and the ridicule of both Sadducees and Scribes-Pharisees.”<sup>72</sup> But the sentence to death by the Roman punishment of crucifixion is a clear sign that Romans had political reasons for the execution that were not motivated by intra-religious disagreement between Jesus and other Jewish teachers. The charge of blasphemy here is the narrative device that leads the Jewish authorities to hand Jesus over to Pilate (23:1), but it is not a detail that is historically plausible.

### *The Trial Narrative as Theological Resource*

If the details of this scene pertaining to a Jesus who would inevitably die and/or to anti-Judaism can be disaggregated from the details of Jesus’s treatment by the arresting authorities, the story can speak to the vulnerability of victims of political force. The pretrial scene of mocking, beating, and hurling insults upon the blindfolded prisoner resonates with the situation of countless victims of torture by authoritarian political actors. Insofar as the dominical saying, “Whatever you did to one of the least of these . . . you did it to me” (Matt 25:40), serves as a principle for Christian reflection, then we see Jesus in all these other blindfolded, bruised, and mocked prisoners of regimes that torture and kill to silence dissent.<sup>73</sup> The message of the passion of Jesus in the context of wider human suffering is that God is not on the side of the torturers but rather is present in the one who suffers from their blows, working to redeem that suffering through resurrection.

72. Ellis Rivkin, “What Crucified Jesus?,” in *Jesus’ Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 226–57, here 253.

73. For reflection on the torture of Jesus in the Gospel of John, within the context of the US policy of torture during the War on Terror under the administration of George W. Bush, see Jennifer Glancy, “Torture: Flesh, Truth, and the Fourth Gospel,” *BibInt* 13 (2005): 107–36.



## *Afterword*

When we set out to write a feminist commentary on the Gospel of Luke, we knew that each of us brought many years of experience in research, writing, and teaching on this Gospel. We knew we had much in common, but we also recognized that each of us had different interests and perspectives and that our shared wisdom would make this commentary much richer than if only one of us wrote it. It has been for each of us an enormously enriching experience to collaborate on this project, even with all its challenges.

A constant challenge for us was having to decide what to include and what to leave aside. New works on Luke and feminist approaches to Scripture continue to appear and will need to be considered in future feminist commentaries on this Gospel. We hope that the interpretations offered here and the questions raised by us and by the eighteen other contributors provide rich fare for your continued engagement with this ambiguous Gospel.



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