

# **Lukan prophetic discourse and social conflict in early Roman Palestine**

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## DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores Luke's theological perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine. It is argued that this theological perspective included a critique of the Judean elite, a theology on social cohesion, as well as proposed positive social patterns. The prophetic discourse of Luke during the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus serves as the primary textual data for the dissertation. The socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine is utilised as a heuristic tool to identify appropriate pericopes, and categorise ideological contrasts between the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine in these pericopes. Socio-rhetorical exegesis is applied to the selected pericopes to examine Luke's critique of the Judean elite, and proposed theological perspective on social conflict. The Lukan discourse on the Last Supper serves as a template for Luke's proposed solutions to social conflict. Findings include Luke's indictment of Roman patronage, extractive economic policies, the use of the Temple for religious and cultural legitimisation, and the neglect of covenantal theology in the public sphere. It is proposed that Luke emphasised Abrahamic covenantal kinship as a theological basis to social cohesion. Concurrent social patterns include positive reciprocity, table fellowship and messianic servanthood. These patterns acted as mechanisms to establish contrast communities that embodied this alternate vision of society.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek Lukas se teologiese siening op sosiale konflik in vroeë Romeinse Palestina. Dit word geargumenteer dat hierdie teologiese siening 'n kritiek ingesluit het op die Judese elite, 'n teologie van sosiale samehorigheid, asook voorstelle van positiewe sosiale gedragskodes. Die profetiese diskoers van Lukas tydens die Jerusalem-bediening van Jesus dien as die primêre tekstuele data vir die proefskrif. Die sosio-wetenskaplike model van die invloed van Romeinse imperialisme op sosiale konflik in vroeë Romeinse Palestina word gebruik as 'n heuristiese instrument om gepaste perikope te identifiseer, asook kontrasterende ideologieë tussen die elite en nie-elite in vroeë Romeinse Palestina in die gegewe perikope uit te wys. Sosio-rhetoriese exegese word gebruik om Lukas se kritiek van die Judese elite, en teologiese blik op sosiale konflik te ondersoek. Lukas se diskoers tydens die Laaste Maal dien as 'n platform vir Lukas se voorgestelde oplossings vir sosiale konflik. Bevindings sluit in Lukas se veroordeling van die Romeinse patronaat, die hiërargiese ekonomiese beleid, die gebruik van die Tempel as godsdienstige en kulturele legitimering, en die gebrek van verbondsteologie in die publieke forum. Dit word hier geargumenteer dat Lukas Abrahamitiese verbondsverwantskap beklemtoon as 'n teologiese grondslag vir sosiale samehorigheid. Hierdie verbondsverwantskap word vervat in sosiale gedragskodes soos positiewe wederkerigheid, tafel-gemeenskap, en messianiese diens. Sulke gedragskodes het gehelp om kontras-gemeenskappe te vestig wat hierdie alternatiewe visie van gemeenskap kon verwesenlik.

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To my son, Christian Jacobs, may you always be strong in spirit.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Lk 21:33 (NRSV)

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### Journals and Bible Translations<sup>1</sup>

BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theological Bulletin</i>
CBQ	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CurBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSHJ	<i>Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of New Testament</i>
JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
M TSR	<i>Method &amp; Theory in the Study of Religion</i>
NA <sup>27</sup>	Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland, 27th ed.
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEA	<i>Near Eastern Archaeology</i>
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>

### Non-Canonical Textual Sources

Ant.	Jewish Antiquities
Apol.	Apology
1 En.	First Book of Enoch
Hist.	Histories
Hist. eccl.	Ecclesiastical History
Idol.	Idolatry
J.W.	Jewish War
Life	The Life

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations follow the conventions as set out by The SBL Handbook of Style, Second Edition.

Marc.	Against Marcion
1 QpHab	Peshar Habakkuk
1 QS	Rule of the Community
Pss. Sol.	Psalms of Solomon
Sir.	Sirach
Theoph.	Theophania
T. Mos.	Testament of Moses
Tob	Tobit

## CHAPTER 1: SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

(Lk 1:51–53, NRSV)<sup>2</sup>

This dissertation attempts to examine Luke's theological perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine.<sup>3</sup> Social conflict is a social phenomenon, and can be studied within the context of social theories. Social conflict theory is a model of social interaction that predicts that there is constant change within a particular society, and that this change continues until another social force intervenes

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<sup>2</sup> The dissertation follows the spelling conventions of British English, and also avoids capital letters in the body of work where possible (e.g. Roman empire not Roman Empire). However, wherever sources and other bodies of work are directly quoted, the conventions are followed in the quote as provided by the author(s). For example, quotations from the NRSV are placed unchanged, even when it follows American English spelling.

<sup>3</sup> Some clarification is needed on the nomenclature "early Roman Palestine". The term itself is taken from the field of Syrio-Palestinian archaeology. Chancey and Porter (2001:165) divides this time period into early (63 BCE – 135 CE), middle (135–250 CE), and late Roman Palestine (250–324 CE). According to this naming convention, the period from the arrival of Pompey in Jerusalem (63 BCE) to the Bar Khokba revolt (135 CE) falls under "early Roman Palestine". It covers the time period (among other things) of the origin of the Jesus movement to the Jewish War. The appeal of this nomenclature is threefold. Firstly, it keeps Roman imperial domination central, and secondly, it skips the confusing political changes in the region by giving a broader nomenclature to the region (as denoted by "Palestine"). Lastly, it underlines the notion that the socio-political environment of various regions within Roman Palestine (e.g. Galilee and Judea) had important commonalities. For example: the origin of the Jesus movement was in Galilee under the Herodian client kings, but the movement spoke strongly to the Judean socio-political environment as well — even though Judea was under direct Roman rule at the time. The two regions, although distinctive, cannot be separated socio-politically.

However, there are still some difficulties with the nomenclature. "Palestine" evokes associations with the current fragile Middle Eastern peace process. No such associations are intended in this dissertation. "Palestine" can also be confusing with the naming of the Roman territory of Syria Palaestina after the Bar Kokhba revolt. However, the use of the nomenclature "Roman Palestine" to include the period before the amalgamation of Syria and Palestine has precedent and is used by various scholars. Biblical scholars who refer to the period (63 BCE – 135 CE) as Roman Palestine include: Hanson and Oakman (2008); Horsley (1993); Oakman (2012); Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003); Marshall (2009); Udoh (2006).

(Borgatta & Montgomery 2000:414). Social conflict theory is in contrast to the social structural functionalism theory, which postulates that societies function by means of consensus between various social groups. Social structural functionalism predicts an idealistic and rather static social dynamic. The point of societal interaction between groups is to maintain a form of societal homeostasis. However, according to social conflict theory, society is shaped by the interplay of coercion and power relationships between various social groups. This interplay of coercion is driven by various power groupings in a particular society. These various power groupings may be of a political, economic, religious or ethnic nature. Social conflict theory aims to understand who benefits from current social structures imposed and how conflict between groups are managed in a particular society (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]).

Early Roman Palestine was marked by severe social conflict and therefore social conflict theory may be an apt approach to the social dynamics of early Roman Palestine. This conflict took on a ubiquitous dimension in Judean and Galilean society, and resulted in the devastating wars in 66–70 CE (the Jewish War), and 132–135 CE (the Bar Kokhba Revolt). These wars were devastating not only because it resulted in an armed conflict with imperial Rome, but also because the conflict took on the characteristics of an internal class struggle within Galilean and Judean society (Lang 1989:331). In other words, social conflict in early Roman Palestine escalated in scope both externally and internally. Externally, conflict escalated with Rome. Internally, conflict escalated between the local Judean elite and peasantry. In both cases, this intensification of social conflict was expressed by an escalation in class violence. This escalation of class violence can be traced in the writings of Josephus.

## **1.1 EXPRESSIONS OF CLASS VIOLENCE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

In the writings of Josephus, class violence in early Roman Palestine is depicted in three stages of development. In the first stage, banditry became a strong social phenomenon in rural areas. During the next stage, class violence spread to the cities through the urban terrorism of the *sicarii*. Finally, violence erupted within Jerusalem

during the Jewish War as different factions within the city walls vied for control of the city.

### 1.1.1 BANDITRY AS AN EXPRESSION OF CLASS VIOLENCE

Banditry can be described as a “pre-political” form of protest and revolt (Horsley & Hanson 1985:48). That is to say that social bandits do not have a political ideology or revolutionary programme at heart, but they exhibit an almost visceral response to the social injustices that they face — since they tend to be located among the economically vulnerable and exploited. Social bandits are peasants who, upon losing their ancestral land due to debt and taxation, join local bands who raid and steal for the sake of survival. Usually their attention is focused on taking from the local and imperial elites (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 3 [Kindle edition]). Banditry came to full expression in early Roman Palestine as the rural peasantry faced a double taxation system under Roman rule (which was paying tribute as well as taxation). This severe burden on the limited resources generated by subsistence farming created an untenable position. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.101) mentions a famine during the governorship of Tiberius Alexander (46–48 CE). This may have resulted in increased debt for the peasantry, and loss of land when defaulting on debt repayments (§ 6.3). Such economic hardship led to a greater concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy elite land owners (Harland 2002:520). It must be said that the extent of this loss of land is hard to establish, and that the greater estates might also have led to more employment opportunities for the peasantry (Safrai 1994:334–335). Nevertheless, due to loss of ancestral land and homelessness, many took on the criminal activities of banditry as the only option of seeking some justice against the Judean and Galilean elite (Horsley & Hanson 1985:67).

Banditry was not a new social phenomenon during this period of time, but enjoyed a celebrated status in the formative stories of Israelite tradition. David, when ostracised by Saul, found that a number of homeless men bound in debt joined him: “Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Those who were with him numbered about four hundred” (1 Sm 22:2, NRSV). Although these men perhaps hoped for a change of their economic status by joining the charismatic

David, they in essence set a scene (or type) of political banditry that could be emulated in Roman Palestine. David went on to become the archetype of the Jewish messiah, and his group of bandits formed the genesis of his new military force. This same pattern (groups of bandits forming around charismatic leaders) repeated itself numerous times in early Roman Palestine as the phenomenon of banditry gained traction.

As early as 47–38 BCE Hezekiah raised groups of bandits in Syria and Galilee (*Ant.* 14.9). Herod had to launch military campaigns against the cave bandits in Galilee before he could consolidate his reign as a Roman client king (*Ant.* 14.15). Eleazar, son of Dineas, became a Galilean champion when he retaliated with his group of bandits against the Samaritans for killing some Galilean pilgrims (*Ant.* 20.6). In the latter stages of Roman rule before the Jewish war, much of the attention of the Roman governors was spent in combatting the cumulative effect of banditry in the rural areas (*Ant.* 20.9,10). As Josephus describes it: “...still there were a great number who betook themselves to robbing, in hopes of impunity; and rapines and insurrections of the bolder sort happened over the whole country” (*J.W.* 2.12).

In Galilee, the effects of banditry especially came to the fore during the Jewish War. Not only were houses looted and properties of the elite burnt, but their influence on the area was so complete that they were in military control of the region by the time that Josephus took command of Galilee (Horsley 1985:69). Their role during the war did not diminish either, as they combined with other bandit groups to become either insurrection forces or mercenaries (Horsley 1985:79).

The Gospels attest to the common occurrence of banditry during this period of time. In the space of two chapters in the Gospel of Mark we find three mentions of banditry. Jesus asks of Judas upon his arrest: “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit (ληστίην, NA<sup>27</sup>)?”<sup>4</sup> (Mk 14:48, NRSV). Barabbas, a bandit, was released instead of Jesus during his trial (Mk 15:6–15). And in Mark 15:27 we find Jesus crucified between two bandits. It might even be that

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<sup>4</sup> Where possible, Greek words and phrases are quoted directly from NA<sup>27</sup>. This is done so the form of words and phrases in the Greek text can be followed.

Mark hints that the enemies of Jesus confused the programme of the Jesus movement with the activities of the bandits.

Banditry, in the context of Roman Palestine, therefore cannot be seen as merely a form of organised crime by desperate men. It had a strong political precedent and overtone. Even more so, banditry demonstrated how social conflict took on larger and more violent dimensions in early Roman Palestine.

### 1.1.2 URBAN TERRORISM AS AN EXPRESSION OF CLASS VIOLENCE

Josephus links the *sicarii* to the earlier Fourth Philosophy by means of hereditary leadership. Menahem, the leader of the *sicarii*, was either the son or grandson of the founder of the Fourth Philosophy, namely Judas the Galilean. However, the *sicarii* were a more militant and aggressive group than the Fourth Philosophy. Whereas the Fourth Philosophy adopted a defensive posture by refusing to pay taxes, the *sicarii* specialised in urban terrorism. They started to operate in Jerusalem in the fifties CE and were very selective and dramatic in their targets (Horsley & Hanson 1985:205). Josephus describes their activities as follows:

When the country was purged of these, there sprang up another sort of robbers in Jerusalem, which were called the Sicarii, who killed men in the day time, and in the midst of the city; this they did chiefly at the festivals, when they mingled themselves among the multitude, and concealed daggers under their garments, with which they stabbed those that were their enemies; and when any fell down dead, the murderers became a part of those that had indignation against them, by which means they appeared persons of such reputation, that they could by no means be discovered. The first man who was killed by them was Jonathan the high priest, after whose death many were killed every day, while the fear men were in of being so served was more afflicting than the calamity itself ...

(J.W. 2.13)

The *sicarii* were best known for their assassination of local elites in a very public fashion — for the purpose of inciting fear among the elite, and demonstrating the

apparent vulnerability of the Judean elite. The word *sicarii* itself refers to the Latin word for “dagger” (*sicarus*) which hinted at their method of killing people. Other tactics they employed included the looting of Judean elite property (*J.W.* 2.13), and the kidnapping of members of the elite for ransom (*Ant.* 20.9). By targeting local Judean elites, the *sicarii* signalled an intent to impact the Judean political landscape.

Unhappiness with the violence of this group finally exceeded the fear they instilled. After killing the high priest Ananias and his brother Ezechias during the Jewish War, other Judean factions in Jerusalem turned against them. The surviving *sicarii* fled the city and busied themselves with the defence of Masada. There the *sicarii* rallied under the leadership of Eleazar, son of Jair. It seems they did not participate further in the Jewish War as such, but preyed on the surrounding country side next to Masada to survive. They were finally surrounded by the Romans and, according to legend, famously chose suicide rather than surrender (Horsley & Hanson 1985:213–214).

### 1.1.3 CLASS VIOLENCE DURING THE JEWISH WAR IN JERUSALEM

As the Roman army swept through the north-western part of Judea in 67 CE, many people flocked to Jerusalem for refuge, and to join the cause of the war. As the Judean peasantry moved closer to Jerusalem, they started to form a group of coalitions called the Zealots (Horsley & Hanson 1985:159–192). Once inside the city these coalitions started to envision a different government than the one formed by the Judean elite. As more of the peasantry flocked into the city, their influence and ability to take action grew. They attacked the elite, and even started to form a new leadership structure for the city with a high priest chosen from among their own ranks. The elites took action and forced the Zealots (under the leadership of Eleazar, son of Simon) to take refuge in the inner courts of the Temple Mount. John of Giscala took leadership of the Zealots, and persuaded the arriving Idumeans to assist the Zealot cause. The Zealots managed to fight their way out of the Temple Mount and promptly began with a programme aimed at purging elite Judean leadership. Josephus described the violence of this group in the following way: “...while their inclination to plunder was insatiable, as was their zeal in searching the

houses of the rich; and for the murdering of men, and the abusing of women, it was a sport to them” (*J.W.* 4.9).

Elite priests (such as Ananus and Jesus) were executed (*J.W.* 4.5). But as soon as the group gained momentum, leadership squabbles splintered it into smaller factions. John of Giscala withdrew to form his own faction. In desperation, the Judean elite allowed Simon, son of Giora (who himself was considered a messianic leader with a private bandit army) into the city to oppose the Zealots (*J.W.* 4.9). Ironically, the very same Simon, son of Gorias, nurtured his influence and power by robbing the elite around Acrabene, and attacking various towns as the social structure started to crumble. In effect, this move left Jerusalem with three power factions: Simon, son of Gorias, controlled the larger outer city area; John of Giscala, controlled the middle circle of the city; and Eleazar, son of Simon, controlled the Temple Mount. These factions spent their time fighting each other instead of preparing for the impending Roman assault on Jerusalem. John of Giscala murdered Eleazar, son of Simon, and attacked his faction in the Temple — under the pretence of entering the area to offer sacrifices (Goodman 2007:125; VanderKam 2001:43). Josephus (*J.W.* 7.8) goes out of his way to describe the atrocities committed by the remaining two factions of Simon and John.

Yet did John demonstrate by his actions that these Sicarii were more moderate than he was himself, for he not only killed all such as gave him good counsel to do what was right, but treated them worst of all... nay, he filled his entire country with ten thousand instances of wickedness... Again, therefore, what mischief was there which Simon, son of Gorias did not do? Or what kind of abuses did he abstain from as to those very freedmen who had set him up for a tyrant... Only once the Romans approached the city did they unify their efforts.

#### 1.1.4 SUMMARY: CLASS VIOLENCE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

When viewed together, these three expressions of class violence demonstrate two dimensions of social conflict in early Roman Palestine. In the first place, social conflict moved beyond milder forms of non-violent resistance (such as protest), into

fully fledged political violence during the course of the first century CE. In the second place, the location of social violence was between the classes of the peasantry and the elite. To be sure, there were more than enough instances of violence between the Roman governors and the local people of early Roman Palestine. But it is clear that Roman imperial policies, as well as local politics, left early Roman Palestine in a position of class war as much as armed insurrection against the Romans. Baumgarten (1997:8) notes that some later Rabbinical sources believed that Jerusalem was not destroyed because of a lack of piety by the Judeans, or by the oppression of the Roman overlords, but because people hated one another so much.

## **1.2 CAUSES OF SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

Oakman (2008:250–251) confirms this perspective, and states that social conflict thrived during early Roman Palestine because of a class chasm between the elite and non-elite. These two social groupings held different visions of how society in early Roman Palestine should function. This meant that they each developed (or held unto) key ideologies<sup>5</sup> in social domains<sup>6</sup> such as politics, culture, economics and religion to base their vision for society on. The elite fought for the socio-political status quo — where product extraction for economic gain solidified their privileged status. This extraction from the non-elite was justified by using the sacerdotal culture of the Jerusalem Temple to legitimise their economic policies. On the other hand, the non-elite envisioned an alternate society where surplus extraction would be replaced with surplus distribution based on the ideals of covenantal solidarity. In this ideal all land (and produce) ultimately belonged to God, and that because of his special relationship with the Judean people, resources ought to be used and distributed justly. This was based on earlier Israelite traditions and prophetic discourses (such

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to § 3 for a definition of ideology. But in short, the definition of van Staden is mostly applied: an ideology is “a system of belief and values that is used consciously or subconsciously to maintain or further the interest of a specific group” (van Staden 1991:72; cf. Malina 1986:178).

<sup>6</sup> The definition of Hanson and Oakman (2008: Glossary 3 [Kindle edition]) for social domains are used consistently in this dissertation: “An institutional system or constellation of social institutions. Every society manifests the domains of politics, kinship, economics and religion, but in different configurations and relationships”.

as Micah 4:4). In this regard, Oakman's systems model for social interaction between the Judean elite and non-elite is important (Oakman 2008:25, see Addendum B).

What Oakman does not explore is the causal link between Roman imperial policies, and the class friction between the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine. It may very well be that the different visions for society in early Roman Palestine existed for quite some time before the advent of the Roman period, but certainly the political management by Roman officials exacerbated the conflict between the elite and non-elite. Roman policies had the following effect on various social domains (Jacobs 2013:174):<sup>7</sup>

On a political level the Romans controlled local politics through the appointment of a new client elite. The best-known example is the patronage of the Herodians. However, this resulted in the long term in a weak local client elite that was unable to stem social conflict on a local level. This resulted in the non-elite pinning their hopes on non-elite leaders (such as prophets, bandits and messianic leaders) for political solutions.

On a cultural level,<sup>8</sup> Roman officials understood the utter importance of the Jerusalem Temple in the Judean symbolic world. Herodian patronage of the Temple reflected that importance, and control was gained by the Romans by establishing a military presence at the Temple. This act diminished the Temple as a unifying factor in Judean society, and the synagogue seemingly rose in its importance among the non-elite as a setting for worship in a local setting.

On an economic level, the Romans bolstered trade in early Roman Palestine, and placed it on the global trade routes. But it is highly unlikely that these benefits trickled down to the non-elite; most likely it served as exclusive wealth creation for the elite.

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<sup>7</sup> The socio-cultural environment of early Roman Palestine (in the area of politics, culture, economics and religion) will be defined and discussed in more details in Chapter 4–7.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to Chapter 5 (§ 5.1) for a definition of culture as it is applied in this dissertation.

Furthermore, the Romans re-enforced an extractive system of taxation and tribute through the local elite. In an advanced agrarian society, such policies were potentially devastating, since it threatened the meagre surplus generated by subsistence peasantry farmers. This led to poverty, homelessness and even banditry among a large portion of the population. All of these would have ostensibly fuelled a spiral of violence in early Roman Palestine.

Lastly, Roman control drove covenantal theology from the public sphere. The realities of Roman might, and the weakness of the Judean priestly elite, eroded covenantal theology in the public domain. It was unable to address the pressing social needs. Theological reflections of the time rather devolved into personal piety and eschatological views, and were unable to provide a robust public theology that would stem class conflict and provide a unifying voice to a divided society (§ 7.3). Covenantal solidarity, which was the Israelite expression that traditionally united the nation, was replaced by the Roman patronage system of negative reciprocity.

The resultant vision for society among the Judean elite can be summarised as (Jacobs 2013:175): on a political level, elite client politics under Roman patronage protected elite power. On a cultural level, the sacerdotal traditions of the Jerusalem Temple were utilised to make elite power and policies acceptable to the local non-elite. On an economic level, extractive policies were applied and resulted in the central control of resources in Jerusalem. These policies enriched the elite, but made little provision for service delivery among the non-elite. On a religious level, politicised religion consolidated the power of the Judean priestly elite.

On the other hand, among the non-elite the following vision emerged: on a political level, the concept of covenantal solidarity led to populist politics. Leaders of these various movements included bandits, prophets and messianic leaders. On a cultural level, communal and domestic culture was influenced by earlier Israelite traditions. Synagogues, and an emphasis on a legal religious practise and purity rules cemented this domestic and communal culture. This emphasis on communal and domestic culture placed a concept of religious power back into the hands of the local community. On an economic level, distributive and subsistence household

economies was seen as the bedrock of economic exchange. On a religious level, personal piety was a driving force, and was based on covenantal ideals.

### **1.3 SOCIAL CONFLICT AND THE GOSPELS**

#### **1.3.1 GOSPEL NARRATIVE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT**

The social-political environment of the Gospel narrative was characterised by escalating social conflict, particularly between the peasantry and the elite. Certainly, the best-known example of social conflict during this period of time was the trial and condemnation of Jesus of Nazareth. Too much has been made of the interplay of early Judaism and Christianity by invoking this incident. This has often led to blaming the death of Jesus on Judaism, and thereby propagating anti-Semitism in cultures much later and much different from early Roman Palestine. Socio-politically speaking, the actual point of the death of Jesus was rather the internal political interplay between the Judean elite, and an upstart popular peasant prophet. And this interplay escalated in an exceptionally unstable political environment. It is not for nothing that the Gospel of John remarks that the high priest Caiaphas “advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people” (Jn 18:14, NRSV). Such was the realities of the powder keg of political violence that came from recurrent reprisals by the Roman overlords against social unrest, as well as the spiralling unrest between the elite and peasantry. In other words, the condemnation of Jesus was an example of the ongoing conflict between the Judean elite and peasantry. Borg (1991:13) describes the condemnation of Jesus as the result of an intra-Jewish conflict:

The conflict between Jesus and his Jewish opponents was thus an intra-Jewish conflict (with the elite who represented the dominant ethos) about how to interpret the tradition... It was only when the implied challenge of the full ministry in Galilee was recognized for what it was, first by the scribes, but then also by the priestly aristocracy, that plans had to be made to have him removed.

So even in the most central story of Christianity, the shadow of social conflict in early Roman Palestine is lurking beneath the surface. The actions of the political elite against Jesus of Nazareth was (from their point of view) not an attack against the central figure of Christianity, but rather the aggressive actions of the political elite against a popular peasant leader. Therefore, the tragedy of the matter is how they acted in a hasty and ruthless manner to do with away with one of their own countrymen — all in the name of political expediency.

Certainly, for a while the actions of Jesus have been irking the political elite as he systematically derided their sources of power. Several examples exist, but two incidents from Luke 19 would suffice: when entering Jerusalem as a triumphant Jewish messiah, he undermines the new political realities where power is granted by Roman patrons to the current Judean elite (as opposed to power gained by the older Israelite tradition of the Davidic covenantal lineage). By enacting the messianic prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 by riding on a donkey, he provides a mocking alternative to the pompous Roman entries into cities, and harkens back to the older Israelite traditions of royalty. Those attending would immediately have recognised symbolism for what it was: an indictment on the patron/client relationship of the Judean elite with their Roman patrons, and a symbolic appeal to return to the Davidic covenantal ideals as means of solution to Judean and Galilean political ills.

The second incident in the narrative in Luke 19 is when Jesus disrupts the economic activities in the Temple. He challenges the way the religious institutions of Jerusalem were used by the Judean elite to legitimise their economic and political power locally. The Temple stood out even in this turbulent time as a dominant symbol of Jewish religion and culture. Different factions followed various strategies to try and gain political control of the Temple. The Romans seized the high priestly garments and kept it under their guard at the Antonius fortress — only to give it to the high priest on Passover should the crowds be deemed docile enough (Crossan & Reed 2001:241). The Herodians kept control of the Temple by appointing (and killing) several high priests, thereby keeping the high priests under their control (Sanders 1992:322). The Sadducees tried to keep control of the Temple by virtue of the membership of the high priestly families (Saldarini 1989:298). The Pharisees could claim no right to the Temple, but extended the Temple into the daily lives of the ordinary person by their

views on purity laws (Deines 2010). The Qumran community withdrew from the broader Judean culture by forming an introversionist community, but there they re-enacted the Temple functions in a purer way according to their theological interpretation (Cohen 1996:155). The Temple was not just an extremely important religious symbol of the day, but due to the embedded nature of politics and religion the Temple also stood out as a source of power. It could, by virtue of its religious influence, legitimise the political agendas of various factions in the cultural environment of early Roman Palestine. It provided a platform by which the political agendas of various factions could be furthered. The interests of the various factions in the Temple indicate that whoever controlled the Temple, controlled the cultural landscape of early Roman Palestine.

For the Gospel narrative, Jesus himself replaced the claims of other factions to the Temple with his own person and authority. Jesus will destroy and remake the Temple in three days (Mt 26:61; 27:40). This replacement is necessary because the “chief priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people” have eroded the “house of prayer” to a “den of robbers” (Lk 19:45–47, NRSV). In other words, the political elite used their religious authority to legitimise their unjust political and economic agenda. These were not random actions done by Jesus, but firmly directed at the very foundations of elite Judean power and wealth: Roman patronage and the Jewish high priestly families. For his actions, Jesus had to die.

### 1.3.2 THE GOSPELS, SOCIAL CONFLICT AND HISTORICAL JESUS RESEARCH

If the social and political landscape of the early Jesus movement had such a strong backdrop of social conflict, then the interaction between the theology of the writings of Jesus movement and the political history of early Roman Palestine becomes increasingly important. However, current research delivers surprisingly little focus on the theological interaction between the Gospels as a whole and social conflict. Although running the risk of oversimplifying the matter, three reasons may contribute to this:

In the first place, much of the attention of historical Christian theology has been on the act and consequences of the Cross and the Empty Tomb. The focal point of

theology has often been on how the divine act of salvation changed creation (and how Christian authors understood these changes), and how this act re-interprets what goes before it. But in the process, the actions and words of Jesus before his condemnation can easily be reduced to a mere a curtain raiser to the Cross. As Wright (1996:14) succinctly puts it:

The reformers had very thorough answers to the question 'why did Jesus die?'; they did not have nearly such good answers to the question 'why did Jesus live?' Their successors to this day have not often done any better.

This ties in well with the second reason, namely that due to the separation of church and state in modern Western culture, the danger exists that the modern Western exegete holds this separation as a basic presupposition when approaching the Gospel texts. No such distinction between secular and religious institutions existed in the ancient world — religion was either a source of political and economic power, or a justification for the use of political and economic power. That is to say, religion was embedded in other institutions (Oakman 2008:248). In the words of Hanson and Oakman:

By embedded we mean that they [the institutions of economics and religion] did not exist substantially apart from the larger domains. They were conceived and they operated as particular manifestations and subsets of political and kinship institutions...To illustrate the last point, Herod the Great not only expanded the Jerusalem Temple Mount with tax monies, but built temples in the honour of Roman emperors and gods. The emperor of Rome was not only the supreme commander of the government and military but was the Pontifex Maximus of Roman religion.

(Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition])

In order to effectively study the theology of various religious movements and sects of that period, it is therefore imperative to consider the socio-political environment of the day as well. It is exactly in the context of social conflict that the Jesus movement developed and flourished. The challenge then to the modern reader is to see the

writings of the Jesus followers (such as the Gospels) in the light of the social environment which informed and interacted with it. Since social domains tended to be embedded in each other in the ancient world, it is unwise to separate the theology of the Jesus followers from the social conditions it flourished in. It is very likely that the issue of social conflict (and not just the question of pure religious ideology and practice) would have been prominent among the Jesus movement. Glimpses of the weightiness of this conflict appear regularly in the Gospels and Acts. As the disciples asked of Jesus: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6, ESV).

In the third place, the development of the research of the historical Jesus has led to two divergent approaches to the socio-political environment of the Jesus. These approaches have broadly been dubbed the Old and the New Quest. Both these approaches may have stifled research into the interaction between Gospel narratives (and discourses) and social conflict: as one of the strongest proponents of the Old Quest, Schweitzer, advocated an apocalyptic aspect to the agenda of Jesus. In the view of Schweitzer, the preaching of Jesus of the kingdom of God “signalled the end of history, the end of the world” (Horsley 2012: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]). In other words, the coming of the kingdom not only interrupts history and the socio-political factors that led to that history, but decimates it. Should this view be accepted, it would resist further research into how the Gospels interacted with social conflict and which solutions were proposed. If history is to end, no further interaction and no solutions are needed to social conflict. The end of history is the ultimate solution.

During the New Quest of historical Jesus research, some of its advocates minimised the apocalyptic aspects of the Jesus movement. There was a renewed emphasis on the historical Jesus (Wright 1996:23).<sup>9</sup> But the historiographical value of the Gospel writings itself came under renewed criticism. This led to remodelling of the

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<sup>9</sup> “On 23 October 1953, Ernst Käsemann gave a now-famous lecture to a group of former Bultmann students on ‘The Problem of the Historical Jesus’, thereby beginning a significantly new phase, which quickly styled itself ‘The New Quest for the Historical Jesus’. Käsemann, aware (as in all his work) of the dangers of idealism and docetism, insisted that if Jesus was not earthed in history then he might be pulled in any direction, might be made the hero of any theological or political programme” (Wright 1996:23).

understanding of the Jesus movement fashioned from worked and reworked individual aphorisms (based on redaction criticism), the investigation of other textual sources than the Gospels, as well as the use of archaeological data. A rejection of the complete narratives and discourses of the Gospels followed (Horsley 2012: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]). And although this has led to new theories concerning the approach of the historical Jesus to social conflict and the socio-political environment of the day, it also diminished the interaction between the larger Gospel narrative and discourses itself and social conflict as a textual source. This approach has been popularised by the work of the Jesus Seminar initially and later by the works of Crossan.<sup>10</sup>

Horsley (2012: Chapter 6 [Kindle edition]) criticises the atomistic approach of the New Quest on the basis of whether such methodology would actually be reflective of the socio-historical environment of the Jesus movement: it is improbable that anyone would have communicated in mere individual sayings or proverbs. Individual sayings simply do not provide large enough units of communication. As the leader of a movement, Jesus required social context for any saying to make sense to his potential followers. There had to be longer discourses and narratives to gain and mobilise a following. The expectation then should be that at least some of these discourses and narratives (instead of mere individual sayings) were transferred from oral to textual tradition. Furthermore, in taking individual sayings from its textual sources of origin, researchers also leave behind the meaning context for those sayings. It is left to the modern researcher to classify and place the saying and thereby providing meaning context to it. But in the process, subjective (and modern) meaning can easily be inserted into the text. The danger here is that Jesus starts sounding less than a first century Jewish person, and more like what may be culturally appropriate to the researcher. Lastly, the Gospels themselves are not

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<sup>10</sup> There is some contradiction in the literature whether the main proponents of the Jesus seminar (such as Crossan) falls under the “New Quest” (Wright 1996:29), or the “Third Quest” (Meier 1999:459). But Wright and Meier are making different points. Wright is placing the thrust of the work of the Jesus seminar and Crossan closer to the demythologising programme of Bultmann (which renders Jesus as non-apocalyptic); Meier is pointing out that the Jesus seminar and Crossan is part of a new academic development that studies the historical Jesus within the context of early Judaism (regardless of the verdict made on the eschatological views of the historical Jesus). Wright’s line of thought is followed here.

made up of mere individual sayings, but of stories of a certain sequence of interrelated episodes and discourses pertaining to these stories and other issues. These allow for a better view of how Jesus interacted with various people and how he came into conflict with rulers and their representatives. The Gospels “portray Jesus as a historical actor or agent, and not as an unengaged individual teacher who utters individual saying and aphorisms” (Horsley 2012: Chapter 6 [Kindle edition]). This opportunity is lost when the Gospels are endlessly subdivided by a stratified approach.<sup>11</sup>

Horsley advocates therefore a recognition of the Gospels as the principal textual source for the historical Jesus, not necessarily in order to read the “life” of Jesus from its pages, but to study (at the very least) the Jesus movement within its context. This is to be approached not by focusing on the atomistic sayings attributed to Jesus, but comparing the earlier sources (Q and Mark as earlier layer) and then with the later synoptic Gospels and John when the whole of the discourse and narrative is considered. This allows for an approach exploring a “relational Jesus in a historical context” (Horsley 2012: Chapter 6 [Kindle edition]).

Wright (1996:89) agrees with Horsley in seeing the advantages of a more inclusive take on the Gospels within current historical Jesus research:

If today there is a new wave of historical seriousness about Jesus, there is also a new sense, well beyond what early redaction-criticism envisaged, that the gospels are to be seen as texts, works of literary art, in their own right. This has sometimes misled scholars into supposing they are therefore of less historical value. However, there are signs that a more

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<sup>11</sup> Ong (2013:117) points out that Horsley representation of the atomistic approach of especially Crossan is not wholly accurate: there is a difference between examining the Jesus sayings with the purpose of determining historical probability, and the reading of larger units of narrative and discourse to examine the intended message of the text. Furthermore, in the “triple triad” methodology of Crossan, he only examines the individual sayings of Jesus on the third part of the triad. The point made in this dissertation though, is that the Gospels should be allowed to speak for itself concerning its perspective on the social issues that addressed, rather than muting its voice by simply superimposing historical data and social models. To this end, the interaction between socio-scientific models and the text serves the aims of this dissertation better.

mature approach is beginning to form. It is becoming apparent that the authors of at least the synoptic gospels, which still provide the bulk of the relevant source material, intended to write about Jesus, not just about their own churches and theology, and that they substantially succeeded in this intention.

For Wright, the time has come to describe a new move within historical Jesus studies that he dubs the Third Quest. Although the various authors of the Third Quest may pose divergent theories as to the identity and aims of Jesus, they continue the trend of the New Quest of following a stronger historiographical approach to Jesus. However different from the proponents of the New Quest, they allow the Gospels and other first century sources to provide large scale narratives (instead of breaking the narratives into smaller criticised pieces). By applying the historical method, these narratives provide hypotheses that is then compared to the *prima facie* evidence of that period in the form of compatible textual and archaeological data. Furthermore, proponents of the Third Quest maintain a greater urgency to place Jesus intimately within his Jewish context and challenges.

### 1.3.3 THE GOSPELS AS HISTORY FROM BELOW

Although the approaches and hypotheses of historical Jesus research are noted, incorporated and used as points of comparison in this dissertation, it also creates a less than elegant (and even torturous) point of departure for this particular research question. The problem is that, ironically, historical Jesus research itself has become somewhat stratified and highly contentious in its categories. The point of contention lies in the choice of historiographical approach when researching the historical Jesus and his socio-historical context. This creates a quandary for the research question where each of the presuppositions and hypotheses of historical Jesus research must be motivated and defended by another hypothesis. This may very well then end with research within research, complicate the suggested scope of this particular research question, and confuse what the actual aims of the research. Some clarification is needed though on the approach taken to the relationship between text and reality in this dissertation, as well as the view taken on the authorship of Luke. This will be done in chapter 3 (§ 1.4.1.1)

Perhaps a simpler departure point is the historiographical approach to the Gospels as history from below (as proposed by Bauckham in 2011). “History from below” is the historiographical approach championed by the historians Rudé (1959) and Thompson (1963). In essence this approach recognises that much of history is written by the political elite, and that their take on historical events is surely tainted by their inevitable need to protect and legitimise their elite status. A prime example of this is the works of Josephus who himself became an elite Roman client (§ 1.9). Although his work is often used to describe social conditions of early Roman Palestine, his disdain for the non-elite is clear (as can be inferred from even just the quotes in this chapter). Although his work provides a very valuable textual source pertaining to this period of time, his motives taint the effort to gain an understanding from the perspective of the common person in early Roman Palestine. How would the vast majority of people, who found themselves in the peasant category, have perceived and participated in their social conditions?

Here Bauckham proposes that the Gospels fits in well with an effort to gain a history from below. The Gospels (however one may choose to stratify and validate its content) was certainly not written from an elite perspective, and more importantly: the characters presented within the Gospels are mostly of a non-elite nature. In fact, it can be stated that the elite characters in the Gospels mostly appear only to contrast and highlight the plight of the non-elite. In order to gain this history-from-below from the Gospels, the narrative and discourse around the characters must be allowed to present itself as a whole before it is approached critically. This theory fits in well then with the appeal of Wright and Horsley, both for allowing the overarching narrative of the Gospels as a legitimate textual source, and for taking the Jewish nature of the identity and aims of Jesus more seriously. Furthermore, it is very suitable to the topic of social conflict: the brunt of social conflict is borne by the non-elite. It is the injustice perpetuated on them that spur them into action. It is their contrasting values and alternative political ideologies that serve as a sparring partner to elite concerns. It is the moral high ground to understand social conflict from the perspective of the victim, not the perpetrator.

It is not proposed by following this approach that all historiographical matters pertaining the Gospels have been resolved. Rather it is argued here that the interaction between the Jesus movement and its socio-cultural environment must be studied by allowing the Gospels to “speak for itself”. Furthermore, the aim of this dissertation is not to compile a historical description of the Jesus movement, or of social conflict in early Roman Palestine. Rather the aim is to compile a theological perspective of the Jesus movement on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (§ 1.4.1.1).

#### **1.4 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The following factors then suggest a departure point for further research into the interaction between the fabric of the Gospel narratives and discourses and social conflict in early Roman Palestine: firstly, the social context of the Gospels warrants a closer look at the interaction between the Gospels and the immediate background of social conflict, to fully examine the theology and practices that the Gospel authors propose. Secondly, the advocacy of Horsley and Wright for the allowance of overarching Gospel discourses and narratives as a legitimate textual source for historical Jesus research, invites further research into the interaction between Gospels and social conflict as part of the effort to fully understand the identity and aims of the Jesus movement. Thirdly, renewed attention is necessary to remove the writings of the Jesus followers from the realm of a merely religious (or even apocalyptic) group to a more realistic historical background of a socio-religious movement grappling with its socio-political environment and proposing various theological, political and economic answers to the issues it faced. In other words, a closer look at the interaction of the Gospel writings with social conflict recognises the embedded nature of the various social domains in early Roman Palestine. Fourthly, approaching the Gospels as “history from below” allows for a valuable take of the ordinary person on the issue of social conflict in early Roman Palestine, and how the Jesus movement challenged and empathised with that person and their communities.

### 1.4.1 THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The scope of the interaction between social conflict and the totality of Gospels would provide overwhelming amounts of data. There needs to be some sort of filter to limit the amount of data to keep the research question in focus, and the formulation of a hypothesis and conclusion attainable. This filter cannot be arbitrary, but needs to be applied in such a way that it generates meaningful data. Two filters are applied, namely: to limit the scope of the research by limiting the research areas where data can be obtained, and to use models to categorise and filter data in a meaningful way. The use of models in this dissertation will be discussed in Chapter 3 (which explains the methodology of the research). Here an attempt will be made to limit the scope of the research in a meaningful way. The scope can be clarified in this case by placing focus on one (or more) of the Gospels, and defining which portions of that Gospel would be applicable for data. Five limitations on the scope is given. It is argued that these five limitations provide a way of keeping focus on meaningful data.

#### 1.4.1.1 The study of Luke-Acts

Luke-Acts serves as the primary textual data for the research question. This dissertation aims to examine the Lukan account of the early Jesus movement and the early Jerusalem church (the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles 1–7).

##### 1.4.1.1.1 *Luke-Acts and social conflict*

Luke provides a strong focus on the disenfranchised and poor in his writings, and is therefore very relevant to the class divide that propagated social conflict in early Roman Palestine. Luke provides an emphasis on “Jesus’ care for those on the edge of society” (Bock 2012:344). This emphasis can readily be observed in Luke’s depiction of women and the poor as low social groups in early Roman Palestine. This is attractive to the research question, since it provides an implied voice from the non-elite, and the interaction of the Jesus movement with their perspectives.

Furthermore, Luke provides more details on Jewish practices and beliefs than any other contemporary author (including the remainder of the Gospels), with exception

of the writings of Josephus. The conflict between the Pharisees and the Jesus movement is very notable in Luke, but of greater interest to this research is the detail given in Luke pertaining to the Judean elite — especially of the Sadducees and high priestly families. They appear regularly in conflict scenarios with the Jesus followers (Moessner 2010). Luke also contains the most non-elite characters in the Gospels and therefore offers an opportunity to draw up a social perspective “from below” (Bauckham 2011).

Luke provides a link between the story of the Jesus movement and the early Christian communities. Luke provides a perspective where “one cannot see Jesus without understanding the story of the community that he was responsible for launching” (Bock 2012:28). This is important for the purposes of the dissertation since the story of the Jesus movement and the story of the early Jerusalem church offer points of comparison — the ideologies and social patterns proclaimed in Luke are put to practice in Acts. The depiction of the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church offers points of comparison to the discourses in Luke. Since the dissertation aims to examine how Luke understood social conflict, depicted social patterns initiated by the early Jerusalem church can be compared to the ideologies proclaimed in Luke. In other words, Luke discusses the transition of the early Jesus movement to the early Jerusalem church (Acts 1–7). This provides ground for the study of how the prophetic discourse of the Jesus movement intersected with the depicted activities of the early Jerusalem church (§ 1.4.1.5).

But more specifically, Luke contains a strong sense of the social location of the characters themselves in its narrative. There are the powerful — the masters and the wealthy, but also the powerless, the slaves, the servants and the poor. The social interaction between the powerful and the powerless is featured throughout. In other words, characters in a high-power position interact with characters in a low position. There seems to be a “high-low configuration” of social interaction in Luke (van Staden 1991:68). This is very appealing and applicable to the aims of the research question and its emphasis on the social conflict theory.

#### 1.4.1.1.2 The authorship of Luke-Acts

Recently some have started to link this high-low configuration of Luke with the actual social location of the author himself. Kuhn (2010: Chapter 3 [Kindle edition]) postulates that Luke was an elite Judean, who, under the influence of the Jesus movement, renounced the ideologies of the Judean elite and embraced a concern for the non-elite. Kuhn bases this theory on a socio-scientific examination of the Lukan text. In the first place, the low literacy rate makes a member of the elite more likely to have written the Gospel of Luke. Even more so, the high literal grasp and proficiency of Luke seem to indicate an elite author.<sup>12</sup> Kuhn presupposes that Luke was Judean (not a Hellenised Jew) based on his intimate knowledge of the Judean sacred traditions; the similarities between his work and the traditional writings of Israel; close “verbal and conceptual parallels” between the text in Luke and Qumran texts; as well as the positive outlook Luke exhibits for purity concerns.<sup>13</sup>

Although the theory of Kuhn presents a tantalising prospect for the given research question, it should be stated that the social location of Luke-Acts remains notoriously hard to pin down and remains highly debated among scholars (Robbins 1991:305–306). But not only the social location of Luke is proving to be contentious. So too historical knowledge of Luke is somewhat sketchy (Bonz 2000:92–93). Bonz dates the Gospel of Luke between 90 and 100 CE, with a major metropolitan centre of the Greco-Roman world as the location. She disagrees with the hypothesis of Kuhn and postulates that Luke was “either a fairly literate, Greek-speaking gentile or a thoroughly Hellenised Jew”. She takes both hypotheses (the geographical and social location) as reasonably representative of modern scholarly opinion.

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<sup>12</sup>According to Kuhn, this does not make a non-elite author impossible (in the form of perhaps a lowly scribe in the retainer class), but the low literacy rate in the population, and the high literal proficiency of the author does make it improbable that the text came from a non-elite author.

<sup>13</sup>This dissertation takes a different position on Luke’s outlook on purity codes. Borg’s line of reasoning is followed more closely that Jesus embraced a programme of inclusive mercy, and that thereby Luke’s view on purity codes was mostly negative (§ 2.2.2).

Traditionally the authorship of Luke-Acts has been linked to a companion of Paul. Textually this is based on the “We” Passages in Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18 & 27:1–28:16. Various attempts have been made to depict the “We” Passages as either a literary device, or the vestiges of an account used by the author of Luke-Acts. None of these arguments are broadly accepted though (Stein 1992:21–22). Even if the “We” Passages are taken as internal textual evidence of the author’s companionship with Paul, it does not provide positive textual evidence of the author’s identity, but merely evidence to who should be excluded from a list of possible authors.

It is left to early church traditions to connect the authorship of Luke to the New Testament figure mentioned in Philemon 24, Colossians 4:14 and 2 Timothy 4:11. These New Testament passages do not provide much details concerning Luke the Physician, except that Luke was a companion of Paul, a Gentile, and a physician. These early church traditions include the Muratorian Canon, the Anti-Marcionite Prologues and the Bodmer Papyrus (Stein 1992:21). All these sources date much later than Luke-Acts and is thought to be written by the end of the second century CE. It is not surprising then that the authorship of Luke-Acts is disputed. The best approach is likely that of Green (1997:21) and Marshall (1978:33), who postulate that the authorship of Luke is of secondary importance to understanding the Gospel itself. This is based on the observation that the author does not choose to self-identify in the text. The author therefore does not consider his or her identity to be of the utmost importance. For Green (1997:21), even if the early church traditions of the authorship of Luke-Acts are accepted, the information about the historical person is so scant in the New Testament that other devices such as the implied author offers better insight into the actual author. This approach is loosely followed in the dissertation.

More should be said concerning about what can be inferred about the authorship of Luke-Acts from the “We” Passages, namely that the author was a companion to Paul. This means that the author was likely to be influenced by Paul’s theological perspective.<sup>14</sup> This approach was not pursued in this dissertation for the following

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<sup>14</sup> The companionship of the author of Luke with Paul is also disputed by some. This is based on the differences between the same events depicted by both Paul and Luke (Guthrie

reasons: the narrative location of the writings of Paul is not early Roman Palestine. The dissertation aims to examine the interaction between the socio-cultural environment of early Roman Palestine and narrative location in the text pertaining to early Roman Palestine. Furthermore, to add the voice of Paul to the Lukan text in examining Luke's theological perspective of early Roman Palestine would be one step too far for the methodology of this particular dissertation.<sup>15</sup>

#### 1.4.1.1.3 The conflation of text and reality in Luke-Acts

Both the historical and social location may still present challenges to this dissertation. If Luke was not native to early Roman Palestine (as per early church tradition), can Luke's view on the socio-political conflict in early Roman Palestine be trusted as historical? Furthermore, should the social location prove to be far removed from the view of Kuhn (for example, if Bonz should be correct in seeing the Lukan concern with the disenfranchised as more of a reflection of the concerns for the churches that he writes to),<sup>16</sup> then how much is Luke's description of socio-political environment of the Jesus movement an effort to formulate a foundational origin story to Christianity in a different actual location than the narrative location (as per the hypothesis of Bonz)?<sup>17</sup>

This concern is noted, but the stance is taken that the content of Luke-Acts is so congruent to the question of social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Luke

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1990:119–122). These differences include some details on the conversion of Paul, and Paul's accounts of the Law (as in the case of the circumcision of Timothy). It is therefore argued by some that the author of Luke-Acts could not have been a companion of Paul.

<sup>15</sup> However, for the purposes of further research, a comparison between the theological perspective of Luke and Paul on social conflict in the broader Roman empire might be significant.

<sup>16</sup> For example: "That Luke's community included a number of women, was socially and economically diverse, and was largely gentile are further assumptions that have also received broad acceptance" (Bonz 2000:93).

<sup>17</sup> According to Bonz, Luke followed the stylistic narrative elements of an epic "to create for the Pauline churches and their ongoing mission a compelling and authoritative foundational story" (Bonz 2000:193). The aim of such a foundational story is to encourage certain social patterns and behavior among the Pauline churches.

addresses many of the social issues that are intimately connected with social conflict), that this congruency carries more weight than the historical concerns for the purposes of this dissertation. But then some care is necessary in qualifying what exactly the research question seek to discover from Luke as a textual source. In the first place, it is not the aim here to draw up a historical account, with modern historiographical methods, of the socio-political environment and intent of the Jesus movement from Luke. Although such an approach is important, it would require a different sort of research question, and a very different sort of methodology than presented in Chapter 3. Rather, the focus here is the totality of what Luke-Acts offers in terms of its theological programme and social concern. In other words, this dissertation strives to examine Luke's perspective on the social conflict in early Roman Palestine, or better yet, the Lukan theology on social conflict in early Roman Palestine. It asks how the early Christian communities perceived the social conflict that raged in early Roman Palestine, and takes Luke as the focal point of a particular perspective. This does not mean either that the dissertation is non-historical in its approach, or that Luke is taken here to be a mere literary work of faith communities separated from its historical environment. It is simply a given here that the canonical Gospels is the primary textual data we have to deal with in the study of the Jesus movement. As Meier (1999:464–465) describes it:

It is a reasonable conclusion of historical-critical research — and not a ploy of apologetics — that the four canonical gospels are the only lengthy continuous sources for the historical Jesus that have come down to us. To be sure, the canonical gospels are permeated with the Easter-faith of the early church and must be carefully sifted with the criteria of historicity — of which more anon. But when so sifted, they remain our main sources, if also our main problem.

The dissertation does not reject historical concerns for the sake of theologising about the matter. Rather it is assumed here, that despite the possible social and historical distance between the actual author of Luke-Acts and the actual Jesus movement, that there was a certain theological and historical perspective on the actual conflict (whether it was historically verifiable or not) that would have influenced these communities. The narrative and discourse on social conflict in Luke is based on

something. Luke compiled an “account” among other accounts of “the events that have been fulfilled among us” (Lk 1:1, NRSV). The approach taken here is to allow Luke to speak for itself, and to allow the text to stipulate a theological view on social conflict in early Roman Palestine. This is because the dissertation aims to be a work on theology, not historiography. It recognises that Luke attempted to compile a theological body of work that interacts with a particular historical environment. It does not help the modern researcher to second guess the theological perspective of Luke based on a dominance of modern historiographical methods. That might be appropriate when compiling a social and political history of the conflict, but it would defeat the purpose of examining the textual data in order to formulate the theology of the Lukan communities.<sup>18</sup> It is argued here that, despite the difficulties that the historical and social location may present to the dissertation, the particular focal points (as discussed in this section) still offers fertile soil for the research question.

Rather, the approach of Green (1997:12) is taken here. Green argues that despite the effort of the author of Luke-Acts to write a gospel with both a concern for ancient historiography and theology, the text is predominantly a cultural product. The best approach to the text might not be a historiographical one — after all, the author of Luke-Acts did not write the text with modern historiographical concerns. Instead, the text is a cultural product interacting with a certain socio-cultural environment.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Although this stance provides clarity — the dissertation is a theological work, not a historical work — it still creates problems with the style of writing. It is a very cumbersome and inelegant way of writing to clarify every time (when a possible historical event is examined or mentioned) that the basic stance of the dissertation is that it is Luke’s perspective on that historical event or data. For the sake of easing reading, this clarification is mostly omitted here.

<sup>19</sup> The writing of Green (1997:12) is insightful in this regard: “All language is embedded in culture, and because Luke’s narrative enterprise will have been set within a particular discourse situation, it behooves modern interpreters to engage as fully as possible in an exploration of the cultural presuppositions Luke shared with his contemporaries. Hence, when we speak of discerning Luke’s ‘social setting’ we mean more than ‘narrative world’ as this phrase is used in narrative criticism. We mean more than the world available to us only through the narrative viewed as a closed system, but less than the world often represented to us by historical-critical inquiry. The former strips the Gospel of Luke of its cultural embeddedness, while the latter assumes too easily that the (real) social world wherein Luke’s story is set can and should simply be read into Luke’s narrative. As we will see, Luke does not represent the ‘real world’ so straightforwardly, but both seeks to provide an alternative view of that world and chooses aspects of that world to emphasize while

Therefore, a good methodology is to examine the text in a sensitive way to the socio-cultural phenomena in the text. Great effort is made in this dissertation to employ socio-cultural exegetical instruments in the exegesis of the text, whilst keeping the danger of ethnocentrism and anachronism in mind (§ 3.1 – 3.2).

#### **1.4.1.2 The study of Luke-Acts with Jerusalem as geographical setting**

This conflict between the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine is brought to a climax in the Luke-Acts section, which focuses on the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem. Even early on in the material of Luke, Jesus prepares for this showdown. Jesus is presented as the predestined one through whom “salvation” and “redemption” would be worked for Israel (Lk 2:22–36). Jesus is depicted as a holy man who, even as a young boy, perceives the Temple as his “Father’s house” (Lk 2:41–49). In other words, the Temple and Jerusalem is recognised early on by Luke as the socio-religio-political centre of early Roman Palestine. If Jesus would have any impact on his social milieu — he would inevitably end up in Jerusalem.

The impending ministry in Jerusalem is fraught with danger. As Jesus completes his ministry in Galilee, Luke describes his resolution to go to Jerusalem: “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Lk 9:51, NRSV). This gives a foretaste of the suffering and vindication of Jesus (he is “to be taken up”), but also a sense of the impending confrontation with the Judean elite (“he set his face” in resolve). It is also significant that there is a shift in the identity of the opponent of Jesus during his ministry in Jerusalem. There the opponents of Jesus are not so much the Pharisees, but are composed of the Judean elite in the form of the chief priest, the elders and the retainers of the elite (the scribes and officers of the Temple). “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the

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downplaying others. The question is, What aspects of the social world of antiquity has Luke chosen to represent in his story—and how has he done so?”

elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (Lk 9:22, NRSV).<sup>20</sup>

It is then apt to focus on Jerusalem as geographical setting in Luke-Acts. This narrows the scope of the dissertation to Luke 19:11–24:53. Luke 19:11–27 (the parable of the Throne Claimant) is included since it is clearly narrated by Luke with Jerusalem in mind: “...because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately” (Lk 19:11, NRSV).

#### **1.4.1.3 The study of discourse in Luke-Acts with Jerusalem as a geographical setting**

The emphasis of the research will be on the various discourses of Luke-Acts rather than on the narrative sections in these writings. This does not mean that the narrative (or stories) should be ignored, but the discourses itself provide a more detailed glimpse of the issues that the Jesus movement honed into, the ideology that was held, and the solutions it proposed.

Malina’s definition of a discourse is applied throughout the dissertation: “‘Discourse’ here means any collective activity that orders its concerns through language (Malina 2001: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition])”. This is to say that discourse refers to how a social group or entity communicates its agenda and ideas through language. Examples of discourse abound, and include academic disciplines, political systems and religious belief systems. When a discourse becomes a dominant view in a society it tends to become an ideology. For Malina, an ideology is a dominant set of ideas that seeks to “monopolise ways of speaking about the world”. In other words, ideology tends to be expansive and aggressive in its outlook. The discourse set by an ideology could be termed “orthology”. Orthology is the product (in the form of discourses) formulated by the ideology of a particular society or subset of society. By propagating a

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<sup>20</sup> Green (1997:371) argues that the chief priests, elders and scribes appear in Lukan narrative (Lk 9:21; 19:47; 20:1) as the collective descriptive terms for the elite Judean leaders that are responsible for the death of Jesus.

discourse, a particular desired behaviour that flows from the particular ideology can be established. This normative behaviour could be termed “orthopraxy”.

However, a competitive discourse could communicate a different worldview from the ideas of the prevailing ideology. This competitive discourse could be termed “heteroloquy” since it presents a different way of speaking from the ortholoquy. Heteroloquy threatens to upset the institutionalised discourse. “Heteroloquy is dissidence; heteroloquy is subversiveness” (Malina 2001: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]). The dissidence of heteroloquy threatens the prevailing discourse of ortholoquy — since it seeks to modify the behaviour established by ortholoquy. It is reasonable to foresee that heteroloquy would cause “cognitive disorientation of true believers”. Heteroloquy tries to influence both the ideas and behaviour of those that it reaches, but in the process, it also produces outrage and counter-action from the faithful (those who hold to the dominant ideology).

These definitions of discourse provide a useful interpretative framework for the purposes of the research. The Gospel of Luke sets about to communicate its ideas and agenda through stories and discourses:

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.

(Lk 1:1–3, NRSV)

These stories and discourses seek to upset the prevailing ideology of the actual reader. It changes the behaviour of those who alter their belief systems, and causes cognitive disorientation and outrage from those who refute the attack on their ideologies. Of course, the clash of ideas that various discourses present fits the socio-historical profile of social conflict in early Roman Palestine. The discourse presented in the Gospels echoes the battle of ideas between conflicting parties in harsh social circumstances. The Gospels should not be seen as leisurely debates about interesting religious ideas. The discourses of the Gospels set out ideas and

agendas that seek to subvert the actual readers' societies. It is not for nothing that the Jesus followers and early Christian communities faced active resistance. The Gospel discourses sought to change behaviour and transform societies. As the Jews in Thessalonica protested: "When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, 'These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also'" (Acts 17:6, NRSV).

#### **1.4.1.4 The study of prophetic discourse in Luke-Acts with Jerusalem as geographical setting**

The definition provided by Malina of discourses is still very broad. If a discourse refers to any language that reflects how the activity of a collective is organised, then what would be included in the discourses of Luke-Acts in this dissertation? To narrow the scope further, another descriptive term is added to "discourse", namely that the dissertation will focus on the "prophetic discourse" of Luke-Acts. Here the category of popular leadership prophets in early Roman Palestine by Webb (1991) is applied to categorise Lukan discourses.

Webb argues that three types of prophets existed. In the first place, there were the "clerical prophets", who held priestly offices, but also exhibited prophetic powers that augmented their sacerdotal office. Webb mentions John Hyrcanus and Josephus as examples of these. In the second place, there were "sapiential prophets" who were men of wisdom and who could be found in the various sects like the Essenes. Philo may be considered an example of this category. Lastly (and of crucial importance to the research question) there were "popular prophets". This group can be further subdivided as "leadership popular prophets" and "solitary popular prophets". Popular prophets appealed to ordinary people in early Roman Palestine, and did not possess scribal learning (as the wisdom prophets), or a sacerdotal office (as the clerical prophets). Leadership popular prophets followed the example of Moses and Joshua, and founded movements with the promise of liberation. Solitary popular prophets on the other hand announced impending doom with no attempt to gather a following or initiating a movement. Both John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth fit well within the category of popular leadership prophets. These prophets gained a following by teaching and making oracular pronouncements, and by performing various symbolic

prophetic actions to emphasise their discourses of liberation. Webb describes this category of prophets as follows:

These movements were orientated toward the deliverance of the peasants from the oppression and dissatisfaction they felt toward their lot. These prophetic figures called the people to gather together and participate in a symbolic action reminiscent of their past religious heritage, especially the events associated with the Exodus and Conquest.

(Webb 1991:347)

The basis of the ministry of the popular leadership prophet was to address the basic need of the peasantry for liberation by retelling, re-enacting and re-packaging the Exodus and Conquest narrative in a way that would appeal and would be understood by the peasantry. It served as a rallying call and mobilisation tool for popular movements seeking societal change in early Roman Palestine.

Applied to the Lukan discourses, the category of popular prophetic leader may serve as a heuristic filter to identify those discourses that appeal to the basic need of the peasantry for liberation from socio-political injustice. Equally such a discourse may serve as a rallying call to mobilise popular movements for societal change, or state an ideology and agenda for societal reform in order to bring about an alternative society which would bring about justice for the peasantry. Often such a prophetic discourse may refer back to earlier Israelite tradition such as the Exodus, Conquest and the Prophets — in the context of providing an alternative and just society.

In other words, prophetic discourse is operationally defined here as the use of language, to organise and mobilise the collective of the Jesus movement, for the purpose of bringing about change in society, towards either an alternative just society, or a reformed just society. These discourses build upon covenantal ideals of Israel that sought a renewal of Israel. These discourses were thus shared to promulgate the aims of the Jesus movement, and it sought to modify behaviour of communities and even societies. The outflow of these shared prophetic discourses likely aided in the establishment of the early Christian communities. As such, these communities may have sought to practice the ideals of these prophetic discourses.

These prophetic discourses provided a linguistic/theological framework for the early Christian communities that challenged and unsettled the social order instilled by Roman imperial policies. In this sense the early Jerusalem church may have been a contrast society (in the terminology of Lohfink [1982:72]). This is to say that this community envisioned and advocated a renewed society, by embodying a contrast society to the one of early Roman Palestine.

To aid in this process of identifying prophetic discourses in Luke-Acts, the social model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) will be used as a heuristic tool to identify the key pericopes of prophetic discourse interacting with social conflict in Lukan discourse (see § 3.4 for a discussion of the model).

#### **1.4.1.5 A comparison of prophetic discourse in Luke-Acts in Jerusalem with the praxis of the early Jerusalem church**

Although the main focus in the dissertation will be placed on Luke 19:11–24:53, Acts 1–7 is included as well. In these chapters the Lukan author continues with the story of the Jesus movement, as they are practising their ideals in the face of social and religious difficulties in early Roman Palestine. But where the Gospel of Luke keeps the main focus on the person and ministry of Jesus, the Jesus followers are now faced with life without the direct physical guidance of Jesus. In the process, they develop a sectarian community in Jerusalem based on the teachings of Jesus. The difference between the mentioned section in Luke (19:11–24:53) and Acts (1–7), is that in Acts the emphasis shifts from the prophetic discourse of the Jesus movement to the praxis of the early Jerusalem church. This does not mean that there is no prophetic discourse in Acts 1–7, but rather that it focuses on the founding and growth of the early Jerusalem church.

This may offer an important opportunity for the purposes of the dissertation. The difficulty with exegesis of selected pericopes is that it produces an ever-increasing focus and depth on limited textual data. In order to keep a dissertation coherent and intelligible the researcher has no choice but to narrow the scope of the research sufficiently. However, a nagging doubt remains when conclusions are made from

exegesis: are the exegetical results an accurate reflection of how the first readers would have understood it (and the implied author intended it)? Or did the exegesis, however sophisticated, miss the point because it is a product of a later and different society? In this sense a point of comparison is beneficial since it has the ability to strengthen or weaken the findings of exegesis. The opportunity that Acts 1–7 offers in this regard is that it gives insight into the Lukan understanding of how the early Jerusalem church practiced the prophetic discourse of the Jesus movement, and how they organised themselves as a sectarian community around what they understood the central tenants of the Jesus movement to be. The dissertation will aim to compare the depicted examples of the praxes of early Jerusalem church with the discourse of Jesus in Luke to examine convergent (or divergent) points.

The danger here is that it is an assumption that the depicted social patterns in Acts 1–7 are based in particular on the Lukan prophetic discourse. It is also an assumption that the social patterns depicted in Acts is a reflection of actual historical realities. So, to state that the Lukan discourse led to the praxis of the early Jerusalem church is somewhat problematic. To avoid such potential difficulties, but still apply the textual data in a meaningful way, what is expected here from examining the textual data of Acts 1–7 is limited: Acts 1–7 potentially lays another accessible layer of textual data to examine Luke's theological perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine. The described social patterns of the early Jerusalem church will therefore be compared with the exegetical conclusions of the dissertation to seek points of convergence or divergence. Should there be good convergence with the exegetical conclusions, it strengthens the exegetical arguments made. Should it diverge, the exegetical arguments are weakened.

In other words, it is argued here that Luke is firstly the author of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts, and secondly, that Luke is a consistent theologian. As noted in § 1.4.1.1.4 the dissertation attempts to avoid a conflation of text and reality. It is not argued that the early Jerusalem church offers a case study of the actual church. Rather, by posing that Luke is a consistent theologian, the reasoning is that the depiction of the early Jerusalem church would be in line with Luke's theology. That offers another layer of data for comparison to the findings made in the exegetical study of the prophetic discourse of the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem.

## **1.5 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS**

The research problem can finally be stated as follows: how did the prophetic discourse of the Jesus followers (according to Luke) interact with social conflict in its primary environment, namely early Roman Palestine? In other words, which connection points can be made between Lukan prophetic discourse and social conflict in early Roman Palestine, and how did the early Jerusalem church respond to social conflict in Jerusalem?

The following research questions can be derived from the research problem and the given scope: how did the prophetic discourse of the Jesus followers (as depicted by Luke) interact with the social order imposed by Roman imperial policies in early Roman Palestine? In other words: how did Luke portray the shared discourse of the Jesus movement that promulgated a particular understanding of the renewal of Israel? And how did this discourse seek to interact with the elite/non-elite socio-political environment of early Roman Palestine?

Furthermore, building on the first set of questions: how was that prophetic discourse applied in early Roman Palestine? This creates then the question of how the early Jerusalem church launched various strategies and social patterns to address social conflict. How (according to Luke's understanding) did the prophetic discourse of the Jesus movement spur the early Jerusalem church on to seek various solutions to social conflict?

## **1.6 PRELIMINARY HYPOTHESIS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The Jesus movement developed in an environment of social conflict. This environment may have contributed to the growth of the Jesus movement (and the early Jerusalem church) as a formative factor, or at the very least presented a social factor that necessitated a response by the Jesus movement and early Jerusalem church.

The Jesus movement was a popular prophetic movement that led to the founding of a contrast community in Jerusalem focused on the kingdom renewal of Israel. As a popular prophetic movement, they shared and propagated discourse that (among other things) interacted with social conflict. As a contrast community, they enacted what society would look like should the tenants of their prophetic discourses be implemented. Therefore, the early Jerusalem church was shaped and driven by a shared prophetic discourse that challenged and disturbed the social order imposed by Roman policies.

Luke-Acts is a good candidate for a perspective “from below” concerning social conflict in early Roman Palestine — as evidenced by the author’s emphasis on the disenfranchised. This dissertation will examine the nature and tenants of the prophetic discourse in Luke-Acts in relation to social conflict in early Roman Palestine, and describe comparative points in the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church.

## **1.7 THE AIMS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

The socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013), will be utilised as a heuristic tool to identify the key pericopes of prophetic discourse interacting with social conflict in Lukan discourse (§ 3.4). Furthermore, this model will be used to categorise various ideologies in these pericopes according to social domain (religion, politics, economics and culture) and social class (elite and non-elite).

These key pericopes will then be exegeted to determine how the Lukan prophetic discourse interacted with social conflict in early Roman Palestine. This will allow for basic statements concerning how Lukan writings understood social conflict, and what social patterns it advocated in response to social conflict.

Finally, the dissertation will compare the conclusions made with the depicted social patterns of the Jerusalem church. Convergent points will strengthen the argued conclusions, and divergent points will weaken it.

## 1.8 VALUE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

In the case of the study of the Jesus movement, current research of the historical Jesus has led to a greater emphasis on environmental and socio-political factors, and their impact on the Jesus movement. This dissertation may contribute to the description of how the Jesus movement positioned itself within the social conflict of early Roman Palestine. This research will examine how Luke placed the theological, economic and political philosophies of the Jesus movement within the social conflict of the day.

In a more modern and local context, the current socio-political environment of South Africa has a strong element of social conflict to it. Understanding the roots of Christianity and their earliest understanding of social conflict can lead to a more productive influence of Christian churches for positive social and economic change within South Africa.

On a broader global socio-political scale, the interaction between the social domains of religion, politics and economics needs constant scrutiny to promote a stable and healthy society, whereby these components of society may serve as mutually beneficial instead of destructive. By understanding social conflict in early Roman Palestine and its resultant influence on Christianity, an understanding of the positive role of religion in social conflict may be better construed (especially so in countries with a Judeo-Christian background).

The research will employ the new socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013), on Lukan texts to generate meaningful data for the research question.

Although much research has recently been done with regard to the social and cultural setting of the Jesus movement and early Christianity, research examining the interaction between Lukan discourse and social conflict is less prominent. Also, much of the socio-scientific research space has been taken up to determine an accurate picture of the historical Jesus, or to determine a revised Christology. Less

research has been done of the strategies of the early Jerusalem church concerning social conflict.

## 1.9 THE RELIABILITY OF JOSEPHUS AS A TEXTUAL SOURCE

As a final note to this chapter, the matter of using Josephus as a textual source must also be discussed. It is apt that much of the dissertation utilises the writings as Josephus as a textual source: Josephus recorded his own version of events leading to the Jewish War. This provides another textual source (other than the Gospels) that reflects the social conflict and conditions of early Roman Palestine. Furthermore, Josephus himself belonged to the Judean elite class. He was part of the Jewish aristocracy, and was under the patronage of the Roman emperors. There is a balance of the Gospels as a history-from-below (from a non-elite perspective) and the works of Josephus as a history-from-above (from an elite perspective). See § 1.3.3.

However, the reliability of Josephus as a textual has also been questioned (Huntsman 1997:393–399). In the first place, ancient historiography is widely acknowledged to have different aims than modern historiography. Rhetoric played an important role, and an account aimed to convince the actual reader of the perspective of the actual author, not so much to give an accurate depiction of what really happened in an absolute sense. In this sense, the works of Josephus rather falls under “apologetic historiography”. The works of Josephus are an attempt to defend Judaism, and himself as well, to an apathetic or even antagonistic Roman audience. In the second place, Josephus demonstrates several types of biases. He writes as a client of Roman patrons. His works are sanctioned by the emperor. So, does his account reflect events accurately, or is it crafted to place his patrons in a good light? It is argued that this accounts for the discrepancies in some of his work (such as *The Jewish War* and *The Life*). Equally, he demonstrates a personal bias in presenting himself in a good light in his accounts. The third problem is the question of what happened when later editors took hold of his works. Has the text been adjusted to place other entities (such as Christianity) in a better light? The fourth problem is the scarcity of textual sources from this period of time from early Roman

Palestine itself. It is hard to implement multiple attestation (although some details can be corroborated by other Roman and Jewish authors).

In reality, the situation is likely to be more complicated than writing off Josephus as an unreliable historian. As noted by some authors, some of the details provided by Josephus has correlated well with modern research (Feldman 2000:590). An example is the correlation between his account of events at Masada, and the archaeological data produced by the excavations of Yadin at Masada (1963–1965). Josephus provides important details on figures such as Pilate, Herod and James. He describes the various movements and social conditions of early Roman Palestine. Nystrom (1997:599–600) notes that recent work on the sociology of early Roman Palestine is heavily dependent on the work of Josephus,<sup>21</sup> and that there is a renewed interest in research in the relationship between the work of Josephus and Luke–Acts, Paul and James. Indeed, this dissertation itself is indebted to the work of Josephus.

In summary, the lack of textual sources from early Roman Palestine creates a double-edged sword: it is hard (if not impossible) to consistently verify details and events of authors such as Josephus, but equally it is often impossible to second-guess all the details and events depicted. The researcher is left with the hard choice of completely avoiding certain history-related research questions where textual sources cannot be sufficiently corroborated, or to acknowledge that the source used is the perspective of the author. The latter approach is taken here. It is also no good to give the impression that the work of Josephus does not feature in a dissertation (even if it is not allowed as a textual source). Many of the authors in the bibliography reference Josephus to make arguments. His work will inevitably influence research related to social and historical matters in early Roman Palestine (even if through another body of research referenced). The work of Josephus cannot be ignored or factored out either way. A twofold approach is used here: in the first place, the elite nature, and close connection between Josephus and his Roman patrons is factored

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<sup>21</sup> A good example of such a work is Horsley, R & Hanson, JS 1985. *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Winston.

in. His work is a history-from-above. This bias is noted when his work is applied to the research question. This adds an extra dimension for the purposes of this dissertation. In the second place, textual sources from Josephus are not used to verify historical details. Rather, it is used to illustrate, and strengthen arguments.

## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

Social conflict was an important social phenomena and driver in early Roman Palestine. The Gospel narratives and discourses reflect this central issue of social life in the accounts of the early Jesus movement. It is argued here that the author of Luke-Acts echoed this phenomenon, and that Luke-Acts provides a particular theological perspective on the social conflict that the early Jesus movement faced. The resultant Lukan prophetic discourse, and suggested social patterns, provided a template for later Christian communities to emulate.

The research question seeks to extract Luke's theological perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine, by examining the prophetic discourse during the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus (Lk 19:11–24:53). The finding of such an exegesis will be compared to the social patterns depicted in Acts 1–7 to determine if it strengthens (or weakens) the exegetical findings.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people”.

(Lk 24:19, NRSV)

Two categories of current research are of particular value to this dissertation. Both these categories will be examined in order to establish meaningful presuppositions before approaching the textual data. Although the research question is unique in its aims and methodology, the question of the historical Jesus and social conflict is certainly not new. It is prudent to harness the findings of appropriate research, since it assists establishing a presuppositional foundation for approaching the textual data. These two categories are: Luke and social conflict, and the historical Jesus as a prophet in early Roman Palestine.

### 2.1 LUKE-ACTS AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

Four authors are discussed under this category; namely Richard Cassidy, Philip Esler, Peter O’Toole and Halvor Moxnes. These authors represent the attempts of the last three decades to examine Luke and topics related to social conflict. None of the reviewed literature is focused on social conflict as a phenomenon *per se*. But their work and findings are related to issues pertaining to social conflict.

#### 2.1.1 R. CASSIDY: A NEW SOCIAL PATTERN BASED ON SERVICE

For Cassidy, Jesus posed a threat to the social order instilled by Roman imperial policies, but this threat was not based on the political actions of Jesus. According to Cassidy (1983:376), Jesus did not propose a change of regime, nor did he advocate another type of political system. Rather, Jesus posed a threat because he advocated radical, new social patterns. And should these patterns of behaviour have gained traction, it would have inevitably impacted (and subverted) the extractive economic policies of the Roman imperial system. Luke strongly championed economic solutions to social conflict in early Roman Palestine. And these solutions predominantly came in the form of particular new social patterns.

The basis of these new social patterns can be traced as follows: in the first place Luke portrays Jesus as compassionate. Jesus is concerned for all people from various social levels and backgrounds — but he is especially concerned for the poor, sick, Gentiles and women (Cassidy 1983:371). Then, Jesus taught and acted in such a way as to demonstrate a strong moral stance against surplus possessions. Jesus lived in a simple way and praised others who lived similarly. According to Cassidy (1983:219), Jesus did not provide an analysis or reason why the poor had such a lowly status. But he notes that Jesus frequently challenged the rich; he especially challenged them on the basis of the use of their surplus resources. Jesus criticised the rich who accumulated beyond their need, and neglected to share from their surplus with the poor and destitute. Finally, Jesus proposed that this hierarchal divide be challenged with a new social and economic pattern of service and humility.

In passages such as Luke 9:47–48; 14:7–11 and 17:7–10, the prevailing ideology of hierarchical leadership was severely condemned by Jesus. The disciples were to treasure the most vulnerable members of the community (as in the case of the children when an argument breaks out about which disciple is the greatest); they were to choose the position of humility (when criticising the social norm of seeking the best seats); and they were to adopt the position of servanthood (Lk 17:7–10). This new pattern was in contrast to the ruling political ideology of patronage. Patronage enabled exploitive economic practices. Cassidy (1983:249) notices especially the use of the social concept of “benefactors”. If one was seeking to be a benefactor, then how can one rationalise the abuse of the position to lord it over people (κυριεύω in Lk 22:24–27)? Such a practice would deny the definition of the concept itself. Of course, the use of “patron” and “benefactor” could have been applied interchangeably in early Roman Palestine. But patrons held different hierarchical implications in the broader Roman empire from the way Jesus defines benefactors in Luke 22:24–27.

Elite economic policies — such as taxation and tribute should not be seen as autonomous, or a static privileged position — but should rather be judged in the light of the desired social patterns commanded by God (Cassidy 1983:296–302). In

commenting on the question of paying tribute to Caesar (Lk 20:21–25), Cassidy challenges the interpretation of Jesus' dictum as one of dualism (where Caesar should receive tribute as an authority in the earthly realm, and God should receive tithes as the authority in the spiritual realm). He rather proposes it as a stance of monism. There is only one authority, namely God. Caesar could not claim authority apart from God; only the true authority of God remains. Caesar could only expect allegiance from society in matters that conform to God's desired patterns. If the things that ought to be rendered to God is indeed rendered; all would be rendered to God. Therefore, all earthly authorities must be evaluated from a theological point of view, not merely a political one.

If such a thing as a "programme" could be assigned to Jesus concerning helping the poor it would be: keeping the plight of the poor in focus, to help the poor from the surplus of those who have plenty, and finding a way for the poor to participate in a meaningful way in the Jesus movement (Cassidy 1983:220).

When applied to this dissertation, the work of Cassidy is of interest in how it describes the outcome of Luke-Acts as social patterns. The discourse and narrative of Luke seeks to subvert existing social norms, but also substitute it with positive social patterns. These patterns often had economic implications. These social patterns sought to address the social injustices that the non-elite faced in early Roman Palestine, and set a subversive example of an alternative and just society.

### 2.1.2 P. ESLER: UNITY IN THE CHRISTIAN SECTARIAN COMMUNITY

Esler (1987:48–49) applies the sociological theories of Troeltsch and Wilson to Luke-Acts. In terms of the theories of Troeltsch, he defines the community that Luke-Acts addresses as a sectarian community.<sup>22</sup> The sectarian community seeks to induct

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<sup>22</sup> The definition of Baumgarten (1997:7) is preferred for a social sect in early Roman Palestine: "A voluntary association of protest, which utilizes boundary marking mechanisms — the social means of differentiating between insiders and outsiders — to distinguish between its own members and those otherwise normally regarded as belonging to the same national or religious entity. Ancient Jewish sects, accordingly, differentiated between Jews who were members of their sect and those not". This meant that Jewish sectarian movements aimed at voluntary involvement of members. Members had to be recruited in

members by means of conversion. Furthermore, the sectarian community drew most of its members from the non-elite segment of villages and cities. In terms of the theories of Wilson, he designates the conversionist approach of sects to the early Christian communities. A conversionist sect holds the belief that the world is corrupt because individuals are corrupt; changing the world starts with individuals changing.

Esler sees the Lukan writings as a response of a Christian sectarian community situated in a Hellenistic city in the Roman East. This newly fledged community found itself on two axes of tension. Firstly, the line of tension between members' previous religious affiliation (such as Hellenistic polytheism or Jewish monotheism), and their current Christian religious practices. The second axis was the socio-economic divide between the rich and the poor. The key question for Esler is how the Lukan writings addresses the potential tensions on these two axes. Such tensions could have undermined the unity of the sectarian community. In other words, for Esler social conflict collapses into the matter of unity within the sectarian Christian community. For Esler the focus of Luke-Acts is not so much societal change via Jesus' message of the Kingdom, but rather how the unity of the Christian community itself is preserved against conflict within and externally. The goal of Luke is not primarily to propagate societal change, but to promote the welfare of the sectarian community itself. This uncertainty concerning the aims of Luke is often illustrated by the perennial question of whether Luke acts as an apologist for the Jesus movement, or whether he is aiming to subvert Roman social values and norms (Rowe 2009:3–5). The argument is often based on whether Luke attempted to protect the early Christian communities from persecution (in which case he acted as an apologist), or

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some way. There also needed to be some distinction between members and non-members (or a distinctive compared to other sectarian movements), hence the need for boundary markers. Social sects were usually small, but required some form of organisation with an administrative body, rules of conduct and initiation into the group (Cohen 2006:120).

The appeal of such groups in early Roman Palestine was often a religious one, in the sense that such a group tended to claim that it "alone understands the will of God" (Cohen 2006:120). What distinguished a particular social sect from another was a religious claim to truth. However, this religious view on sectarian movements has been challenged to include a broader view that such groups had on politics and other social domains. It is in this sense that social sects are applied in this dissertation. It is further argued that some social sects sought to form communities to live out its ideals, in contrast to the broader community. Examples include the Jesus movement in Acts, and the Essenes with the Qumran community.

whether he tried to undermine Roman social values (in which case he critiqued Roman imperial values).

According to Esler, the onus is on Luke to both reinterpret existing traditions to ease conflict within the sectarian community, and to stave off possible conflict with the larger Roman society. Three areas are of importance to Esler: firstly, table fellowship (with its potential divisive elements between members cherishing Jewish purity laws, and members of a Hellenistic background who does not place the same value on purity laws) is attached to the actions and approval of Peter in Acts 10:1–10, with subsequent approval by the Jerusalem council in Acts 11:1–18; 15:6–26. Secondly, Luke emphasises the fulfilment in Christianity of the Jewish traditions, and thereby eases the tension felt by Jewish members of the sectarian community. Lastly, the political approach of Luke is to present the new Christian community as non-threatening to Roman politics. The Christian community is merely a development of the Jewish religion and poses no threat for political instability. For Esler (1987:222–223), there is an effort on the part of Luke to legitimise the Christian community, and therefore protect it from attacks externally.

The research question (and presuppositions) of Esler starts at a different point than the one explored with this dissertation. Essentially the perspective of Esler is a social one, not a historical one. The sociological theories of Troeltsch and Wilson serve as an explanation for the origin of Luke. Luke-Acts had to be written to protect the sectarian Christian community. In the process the historical concerns may be left behind. This approach does skip difficult historical concerns with Luke-Acts, but it may veer into slipping the Lukan narrative into foundational myth-making for Christianity. The dictum of Wright is very applicable here: “If we are to talk meaningfully about Jesus, there is no question where we must start. We must study him within the world of Palestine in the first century” (Borg & Wright 1999:31). To divorce the text from its narrative context should be avoided. This dissertation takes a rather different approach from the work of Esler, in that it views the social conflict in early Roman Palestine as historical, with Luke-Acts as having a particular theological perspective on that conflict. That is not to say that Luke-Acts was written with modern historiographical concerns and methods in mind, but it assumes that there

was a historical basis that led the theological perspective of Luke. The narrative location of Luke is kept firmly within first century Palestine.

This does not mean that a purely sociological reading of Luke is invalid — just that it is not sufficient to address the central research question of this dissertation. Of interest, is Esler's conclusion on the intensification of the moral imperative to care for the poor. Esler interprets it in most stringent terms. For Esler, the issue of poverty can potentially harm the unity of the community. In Luke the emphasis on the poor is intensified, and therefore ought to be focal point in the community as well. Furthermore, the moral aspects of caring for the poor is elevated to the point that the salvation of the rich is dependent on this moral imperative. This would have flown in the face of social customs of the traditional treatment of the poor (Esler 1987:222).

For Esler, Luke gives encouragement to the poor and a warning to the rich. The theological basis of this is that the poor has "first places" reserved for them in the Kingdom of God (Lk 14:15–24). They will be compensated for their suffering at the messianic banquet in the age to come. This priority given to the poor is then enacted in the Christian community as a start to the redemption of the rich. Amendments advocated within the community include the provision of money and food, relief for disabilities, and perhaps release of slaves and bondsmen (Esler 1987:198).

The high standard set here by Luke is explained by the lack of civic welfare societies at that time. The plight of the poor went unattended if not for the Christian community. Also, there was a view that the rich probably gained their wealth by unjust means (Lk 16:9). If some of the wealth has been acquired by unjust means, it goes to reason that at least some of it should be justly distributed among the poor to prevent eternal punishment. This would have induced a strong cognitive disorientation for members of the elite entering the Christian community, because it meant that the protection of Hellenistic elite ideals was threatened.

Not much of the work of Esler will be applied in this dissertation, due to differences in approach and basic presuppositions. Of interest, is the moral aspects of poverty and wealth. Dealing with poverty was not merely a case of economics, but had strong moral undertones that were based on a theological perspective. For Luke dealing

with poverty was not merely a matter of expediency or healthy community dynamics, but a moral imperative.

### 2.1.3 P. O'TOOLE: SOCIAL ACTIVISM AS A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

O' Toole (1983:2) separates the "social" and "political" in his approach to Luke-Acts: "political" is Luke's attitude towards any governing official. "Social" is his instructions to the Christians on how to live in the world and how to live together. According to O'Toole, Luke does not advocate political violence. However, he notes that violence is implied with cleansing of the Temple (Lk 19:45–48), and the injunction of Luke 22:36–38 (NRSV):

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. 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". They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords". He replied, "It is enough".

But this hardly make for a revolutionary setting. Peter was the only one of the Jesus group to act violently upon the arrest of Jesus – only to be rebuked by Jesus himself (Lk 22:49–52). For O'Toole, Luke's allusion to violence only refers to the aggression and assertiveness of the teachings of Jesus. It is not meant as a call to arms and revolution. However, Luke allows for civil disobedience. In Acts 4:19–20 and Acts 5:29, the apostles respond to the demands of the Sanhedrin (to cease their preaching and activities) with the retort that they have to obey God and not people. For O'Toole the political response advocated by Luke is shaped by his theological aims in his writings. These aims are: the importance of faith and baptism, that God was the God of history and would act within history as fulfilment to his promises, and that Christians should imitate Jesus.

It is especially within this last point, the imitation of Christ, that O'Toole expounds the political stance of Luke. Briefly it can be described as follows: Firstly, Christians should embrace a lifestyle of humility and service and secondly, Luke embraces a

global mission of Christ to include the Gentiles. No longer does one have to embrace an ethnic identity to observe all the details of the Torah: “Then Peter began to speak to them: ‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him’” (Acts 10:34–35, NRSV). Thirdly, Luke looks favourably upon the poor, and criticises the rich harshly. This results in social action on the part of the Christians. In Acts 11:27–30 the church in Antioch sends relief to Judea for the famine prophesied by Agabus. In Acts 6:1–7 the Jerusalem church takes care to make sure the widows are cared for. O’Toole depicts the ideal of Luke for the Christian community as a place “where no needy person is found” (1983:11). This was brought about by challenging a materialistic mind set, and promoting the social status of the poor. Lastly, a special focus ought to be on the sick and women as vulnerable categories within society.

In summary, O’Toole proposes social activism as the outcome of the political stance of Luke. Christians, although not called towards political violence, are nevertheless allowed civil disobedience should the occasion demand it. Furthermore, Christians are allowed to use legal means to further social causes. Christians are to champion social causes as an imitation of Christ who was the saviour of the disadvantaged. However, O’Toole cautions that issues should not “be read back into Luke’s time, yet Luke’s opinion should not be stripped of their true force” (1983:14).

Of interest to the dissertation, is the insistence of O’Toole that the Jesus movement in Luke did not stand apathetic to the social conditions it faced. Rather social concerns, and the imitation of Christ, led to social action. Theirs was not mere theological musings, but a call to action.

#### 2.1.4 H. MOXNES: LIVING UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF GOD

Moxnes explores the socio-economic dynamics of Luke by means of socio-scientific models. For Moxnes, the economic dynamics of early Roman Palestine was one of both negative and balanced reciprocity. The dynamic of the elite towards the non-elite was negative reciprocity. This means that there was an extraction of resources from the non-elite by the elite, with negligible assistance of the non-elite for resources given. Among the non-elite the economic dynamic was balanced

reciprocity — the emphasis was on fair and equitable exchange of resources among the non-elite themselves (Moxnes 1988:154). Moxnes (1988:40–42) rightly recognises that the social pattern of patron-client relationships was the driving socio-political force behind the negative reciprocity between the elite and non-elite.

Moxnes starts the description of Luke's proposed socio-economic patterns by examining Luke 16:14 as a key pericope. Here the Pharisees are described as "lovers of money". Luke depicts the Pharisees as a social sect concerned with both money and social status (Moxnes 1988:99). The Pharisees play an important role in Luke because of their status as the main opponents of the Jesus movement. This seems a bit strange, since the financial pressure on the non-elite came vertically downwards from the Judean elite. The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in Luke seems more horizontal between the non-elite itself (or at least they were socially closer to each other than to the Judean priestly elite). Surely the Pharisees would be the wrong group for the Jesus movement to indict?

Moxnes answers this in two ways: firstly, the Pharisees competed with the Jesus followers as a popular movement among the non-elite. The basis of their mass appeal was that they widened access to religious influence with cultic obedience of the Torah in the form of purity rules. In essence, they were "democratising" access to religious power. The dominant role of the sacerdotal role of the priestly elite in the Temple was supplemented by the purity rules of the Pharisees. This, on the surface at least, would have weakened the realities of political power of the Judean elite (which was derived by Roman patronage). With purity rules the perception of access to religious authority was created, and therefore it appealed to the relative powerlessness of the non-elite.

But Moxnes argues that the Pharisees did in fact not oppose the elite, but rather complemented them. They were "lovers of money". Ironically, the social role of the Pharisees was to shore up the social values and cohesion of early Roman Palestine exactly by focusing on purity rules (Moxnes 1988:106–107). Purity rules gave a new sense of meaning and purpose to the non-elite. It encouraged them to participate in society – even if society was unjust. Instead of using their influence to challenge an inherently unjust system, the Pharisees enabled the system by shoring up existing

cultural values for their own selfish gain. So, although they gained power by giving a perceived access to the cultural and religious power of the Temple and Torah (via purity rules), they did not use this social power to bring about much needed reform.

For Moxnes, Luke presents a radical new spin on an existing social value. Instead of changing the social pattern of patronage that drove extractive economics (as per the hypothesis of service of Cassidy), Moxnes proposes Luke placed a higher theological value on patronage: the Romans were not the ultimate patrons, but the divine Jesus himself is the great benefactor to Israel. And since Jesus himself is the ultimate patron, a change of behaviour in both the elite and non-elite is necessary. For the elite, it implied a command to be generous, because God the benefactor is extremely generous. This may include an enforced redistribution of resources — as alluded to in the Magnificat (Lk 1:51–53), and the proclamations of John the Baptist (Lk 3:10–14). This generosity was to be unlimited. There should be no expectation of repayment when followers of Jesus lend money or give hospitality (Lk 6:34–35; 14:12–14). The expectation of non-payment is balanced by the promise of the generosity of God towards the generous with “treasure in heaven” (Lk 6:35). For the recipient (the poor) there was the command to trust in God as their benefactor; not in the rich to provide for their needs (Moxnes 1988:156).

For Moxnes the core concept of this new Lukan social pattern was therefore “to give without expecting a return means to interact in such a way as not to make the recipient one’s client” (Moxnes 1988:157). The rich should give, and the poor should receive, because God is the benefactor of both. This undercuts the power relations that was plaguing early Roman Palestine, and promoted a social pattern which address societal inequalities.

The work of Moxnes has close proximity to the research question: it employs a socio-scientific methodology, and is interested in the interaction between the Lukan text and the social environment of early Roman Palestine. Furthermore, it recognises the centrality of the internal conflict between classes in early Roman Palestine — as well as the external conflict with the Roman empire. The conclusion of Moxnes explains the threat posed by the Jesus movement to the powers that be, since it sought to subvert Roman Palestine and renew Israel along covenantal lines. Lastly,

the work of Moxnes combines the interaction between religion (Jesus as benefactor), politics (the realities of patronage) and economics (the type of reciprocity as a source of social conflict). Although the answers provided by Moxnes are both novel and intriguing in their simplicity, it is doubtful that they adequately describe the depth and dimensions of the programme of Jesus and his followers in its totality. To be fair, that is not the purpose of his work (which is to explore socio-economic relations in early Roman Palestine), but it is still inadequate for the purposes of this particular research question.

#### 2.1.5 SUMMARY: LUKE-ACTS AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

A review of the selected works on Luke-Acts demonstrate the relative lack of focus on the approach of the Jesus followers to social conflict. Of course, the research questions vary from this particular one, and may therefore be less applicable. In general, the reviewed works focused on the social impact of the Jesus followers. In particular, the role of the rich is addressed, and the poor elevated to a higher position of dignity. This stops short though from addressing who the rich were, and why were they rich? Why is such emphasis placed on the poor? Is it merely a case of ensuring a healthy sectarian community (as per Esler) or is it the seminal form of a social activism that seeks to transform society justly (as per O'Toole)? It is not sufficient, for the purposes of this particular research question, to merely emphasise the moral imperative of addressing both the status quo of the poor and rich.

The works of Cassidy and Moxnes are more applicable to this dissertation. Cassidy proposes that Jesus embodied and advocated a radical new social pattern that scorned gathering surplus resources, and rather advocated servanthood as a key value. This may explain the praxis of the early Jerusalem church, when they sold all they had and shared the surplus of the proceeds (Acts 2:45). For Cassidy (1976:371), this social pattern could threaten the economic hierarchy of the Roman empire, and explains the persecution of the Jesus movement. There is a question though if such a social pattern was unique among the Jewish social sects. For example, the Essenes pursued an ascetic and pietistic way of life, and seemed to have a commonality of resources at the Qumran community as well (Cohen 2006:140,147). On face value, this social pattern was similar to the one posed by

Cassidy (albeit that the Essenes rationale for this social pattern may have been different from the Lukan one). The Fourth Philosophy was a radical non-elite group, and refused to pay tribute. But they were persecuted more on the basis of their revolutionary tendencies than their social patterns (Horsley & Hanson 1985:192–194). In other words, social patterns alone were not enough to incur the wrath of the Romans. There had to be a strong subversive ideology attached to the subversive social pattern. Although the Lukan social patterns would have appealed to the plight of the non-elite — and contributed to the popular appeal of the Jesus movement — it seems unlikely that this social stance alone explained the resistance experienced by the Jesus movement.

More applicable is the approach taken by Moxnes. Where Cassidy has Luke provide a practical solution to the question of poverty, Moxnes gives a more rounded theological answer. In the view of Moxnes, the political power of the elite (derived from Roman patronage) is undercut and replaced by the ultimate patronage of God. With the political basis of elite power challenged, their extractive economic privilege was sure to be undermined. If God is their patron, then what are just economic policies? As a popular ideological movement, Jesus and his followers presented a real political danger to the Judean elite.

However, these conclusions are not enough to build adequate presuppositions for the research question to be pursued further. This necessitates an examination of a different trend within New Testament scholarship, namely the question of the historical Jesus.

## **2.2 JESUS AS PROPHET IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

Unlike the body of research on social conflict and Luke-Acts, research into the prophetic role of the historical Jesus is rich in diversity and depth. It is near impossible to cover the many different authors and angles of research within the confines of this dissertation. A cursory examination will be done of a few select authors whose work is appropriate to the research question. They are taken to be examples of scholars depicting Jesus as either a social prophet, or an apocalyptic prophet with a concern for social conflict.

### 2.2.1 E.P. SANDERS: JESUS AS ESCHATOLOGICAL PROPHET

Sanders considers the category of prophet as the best descriptive category for the ministry of Jesus. He notes that it is difficult to place Jesus neatly within such categories, and adds the role of exorcist to the prophetic office of Jesus (Sanders 1993:153). Jesus was more than a teacher or moralist; the essence of his ministry was prophetic. And Jesus' healing acts and exorcisms served as a catalyst for his popularity.

For Sanders, the prophetic message of Jesus was focused on the Kingdom of God, and was eschatological by nature — the historical Jesus can be described as an eschatological prophet. In a similar way to Wright (§ 3.2.3), Sanders defines this view to mean that Jesus did not expect the abrupt end of the world, or the destruction of the cosmos, but Jesus anticipated the “divine, transforming miracle” of God intervening. This divine intervention was to save Israel from her enemies within her historical setting (Sanders 1993:183). This act of salvation would not only include deliverance from Israel's enemies, but also the re-creation of an ideal world where justice would be restored under the rule of God (or the reign of the viceroy of God). However, the theology of the historical Jesus differed from many other Jewish sentiments of this time. Firstly, the eschatological intervention of God was not to be military in nature. Secondly, the symbol of the banquet plays an important part in the ministry of Jesus. The restorative justice of God restores an abundant life for all. The banquet serves as a metaphor for Kingdom abundance. Jesus is not to rest until the feast of the Kingdom is fully realised for all of Israel (Mk 14:25). This theme is drawn even into ordinary daily meals, which could be seen as a reminder of the joy of the Kingdom to come.

The methodology of Sanders is novel in that it uses a hypothetical set of indisputable and probable “facts” as the starting point for researching the historical Jesus, before considering the individual Jesus sayings. One of the primary “facts” about Jesus is the controversy around his Temple-action (Sanders 1985:11). Key to this charged moment is where Jesus cleanses the Temple by driving the vendors out of the Temple Mount. Sanders develops a hypothesis that this symbolic act (together with

his proclamation of the destruction of the Temple), means that the historical Jesus believed in the ultimate destruction of the Temple, a divine rebuilding of the Temple, and the inauguration of a messianic age centred in Jerusalem — where Jesus would rule with the Twelve (Sanders 1985:146–148). Although this view is appealing to this particular research question, there is some dissension concerning the actual centrality of the Temple-action of Jesus. Stein (2001:215) critiques this emphasis on the centrality of the Temple by noting that the Temple incident and indictment were not the main accusation levelled at Jesus during his trial. “Matthew and Mark then point out that other false witnesses said that Jesus spoke of destroying the Temple and building another, but even here their witness did not agree. Why, if the Temple-action is the key messianic claim that led to his death, are the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ trial silent about this?”

Sanders also differs strongly from Horsley as to the aims of Jesus (§ 3.2.4). Where Horsley advocates a strong position of social reform as an outcome of Jesus’ ministry, Sanders sees the work of Jesus as a preparation for the imminent coming of the Kingdom. That does not mean that Jesus did not have particular socio-political views, but that his main focus was to prepare people rather for the imminent move of God that will destroy the Temple and divinely rebuild it (Sanders 1993:188). “Jesus saw himself as God’s last messenger before the establishment of the kingdom” (Sanders 1985:319). However, like Horsley, Sanders believes that the appeal of the message of Jesus was a social one. The Judean and Roman elite has had their day, and the coming Kingdom now belongs to Jesus and his followers. And this kingdom is inclusive even to the outcast and the lowly.

The appeal of the work of Sanders is that he places Jesus very intimately within his Jewish context. For Sanders, the post-Lutheran view of “Jesus against Judaism” is erroneous; “Jesus within Judaism” should be promoted. Furthermore, he emphasises the urgency of the eschatological message of Jesus: Jesus is entrusted with a divine message within an urgent timeframe. However, Borg criticises Sanders for placing Jesus too intimately within Jewish theological thought — to the extent that there are “little that puts Jesus in conflict with his Jewish contemporaries” (Borg 1994:21). There may be some offensive elements to the Jewish audience of the day (should the theses of Sanders be accepted), such as the threat of the destruction of

Temple, the elevation of the Twelve, and inclusion of the “wicked” in the Kingdom through repentance. But according to Borg there is little else that may have put Jesus at loggerheads with other Jewish theological streams in early Roman Palestine. Should that be the case, the hypotheses of Sanders struggle to explain the trial and condemnation of Jesus: why execute someone who largely agrees with you? After all, even the obstinate Jesus, son of Ananias, was simply whipped for his constant pronouncements against the Temple — not executed (*J.W.* 6.5). Lastly, the eschatological view of Sanders may steer too close to the view of Schweitzer. In an absolute focus on the imminence of the Kingdom, is the view of Jesus actually relevant to that social world that he found himself in? This then leaves questions as to the historical direction that Jesus foresaw that early Roman Palestine would move towards, and what social solutions for its conflict was proposed.

In summary, the application of the work of Sanders for this dissertation is the importance of the Temple to both the Jesus and other Jewish theological streams in early Judaism. It begs the question of why the Temple was so central, and what role the Temple played in the social landscape in early Roman Palestine. Chapter 5 in this dissertation will attempt to answer that question, and describe the stance of Luke towards the Temple. Furthermore, the urgency to place the Jesus movement within its Jewish context is noted and agreed with. However, the effort of this dissertation will be to place Luke’s perspective on the Jesus movement in the social environment of first century Palestine — not only on its religious concerns.

### 2.2.2 M. BORG: JESUS AS SECTARIAN PROPHET

Borg places the ministry of the historical Jesus within the context of conflict. There is an internal religious conflict between Jesus and his contemporaries, within the broader context of the external conflict between Rome and early Roman Palestine. Borg gives Jesus’ ministry a strong political tone: Jesus had “concerns about groups, history and politics” (Borg 1984:4). Jesus did not have only religious and cultural concerns, but the reach of his ministry had socio-political dimensions as well. He agrees with Wright that the eschatological sayings of Jesus may be interpreted in different ways. Eschatology may mean, as per Schweitzer, that an imminent catastrophe is approaching — the world as we know it is ending. Or, as per

Bultmann, that the eternal looms over the temporal — the temporal becomes irrelevant in the face of the greater reality of the eternal. But eschatological may also refer to an event within the flow of history; an incisive act of God within the flow of history without necessarily suspending history (Borg 1984:10). Wright also keeps the eschatological view of Jesus within the third definition of eschatology; Jesus and his message is part of the incisive act of God upon the onward flow of history (Wright & Borg 1999:32).

For Borg, Jesus operates mainly as a social prophet and holy man. He adds two further categories: Jesus as sage of subversive wisdom, and proclaimer of the Kingdom of God (Borg 1984:230; 1994:26). As a holy man, Jesus would have been known for a mystical intimacy with the holy, as well as for performing miracles. There were precedents of the category of the holy man in the traditions of Israel. Borg draws comparisons between the mystic knowledge of the historical Jesus and other traditional Israelite figures (such as Moses and Elijah). The essence of this mysticism was not just having a knowledge of the holy/God in a topical sense — there was an implied experiential knowing of the holy/God in a relational sense. “Thus as a Jewish holy man, Jesus knew God. Out of this intimate knowing flowed his understanding of God’s nature or quality, and his perception of what Israel was to be” (Borg 1984:232). In the centre of this mystic holiness, Borg positions a Jesus whose concept of God was primarily that of generosity and mercy. The programme of Jesus was the inclusion of the outcast — exactly because of the inclusive mercy of God. For Borg, this opposed the concurrent Jewish theological streams of holiness, which was a holiness defined by exclusion. This sort of holiness was maintained by avoiding the corrupted — both in a ritual and relational sense. Impure items had to be avoided, so too corrupted (or sinful) people. Sectarian movements of early Judaism did this in order to increase differentiation from the Gentiles, and encourage solidarity within early Judaism. There was a concerted effort to protect the Jewish way of life against the perceived threat of the Gentiles. Holiness as a core value was therefore expressed as purity. And this created a social system ordered towards purity. The key to national life therefore was holiness expressed as being radically different from the Gentiles. Corruption and the impure had to be avoided.

Jesus challenges the ideologies of Jewish holiness (such as Temple worship) with his mystic concepts of mercy. This conflict between the internal condition of Jesus, and the external religious ideologies of holiness, provokes Jesus to act as a social prophet. As a prophet, Jesus sought to subvert the taboos of table fellowship, the Sabbath, and Temple traditions in an effort to align holiness with the mercy of God. Jesus repudiates the path of war that many are yearning for and advocates a path of peace. This peace is to be not a “depoliticised spiritual experience” but “embraced political peace” (Borg 1984: 234). In other words, the Kingdom is not merely a place where your enemies are absent or in exile, but where your enemies are loved. This does not mean that Jesus summarily approved of the imperial policies and work of Rome, but that Jesus had a “conviction that in the political affairs of the world the judging activity of God was at work” (Borg 1984:235). It is rather the duty of humanity to live in mercy, and not with vengeance. It is the business of God to dispense retribution justly. The solution that Jesus sought was a transformation of the value systems of early Roman Palestine from holiness (expressed as exclusion) towards the mercy of God (which was inclusive). According to Borg, Jesus radically criticised the use of holiness as the predominant ethos that structured the Jewish social world. Jesus rather proposed mercy as the main ethos to structure the Jewish social world. “Jesus replaced ‘Be holy as God is holy’ with ‘Be compassionate as God is compassionate’” (Borg 1994:26).

This is expressed in Jesus’ calls to repentance: Israel is to repent of its path of war and its exclusive ideology of holiness. This repentance is not so much a turning away from individual sins; it ought to be a turning away from the social commitments to the cohesive (but exclusive) powers of the Temple and Torah. In Borg’s opinion, should Jesus’ programme of mercy be implemented, the Temple and Torah would become largely irrelevant since they were based on exclusion. This then was the risky call of the prophetic ministry of Jesus. Like the prophets of earlier tradition, Jesus seeks to save and warn people from the impending doom of their ways. By appearing in Jerusalem with Passover, he makes a final (and fateful) public appeal for repentance from exclusive holiness.

The work of Borg is appealing because it follows a clear line of thought concerning theological content of the ministry of Jesus. The theological basis of Jesus’

programme provides a cohesive explanation of why the Jesus movement gained so much traction within Judaism and even beyond Judaism: the Jesus movement was not merely a social movement seeking to advocate the concerns of its followers, but it envisioned a different type of society based on a theological vision of the nature of God. Furthermore, the hypotheses of Borg explain the apparent inter-sectarian conflict between the Jesus movement and other Judean sects. This inter-sectarian conflict was of a theological nature, but had strong socio-political consequences. The inter-sectarian conflict between the Jesus movement and other Judean sects escalated in the context of the degeneration of the social environment of early Roman Palestine. Lastly, the hypotheses of Borg provide multi-dimensional and plausible reasons why Jesus died at the hand of the political elite. It was not only political reasons (as for example the stance of Horsley) but religious reasons as well.

But Borg's treatment of the exclusive holiness of early Judaism may evoke the question of the use of polemics in the Gospels. The question is whether Borg gives a fair version of the religious programme concerning the Temple and Torah in early Judaism. It is reasonable to assume that early Judaism was embroiled in a struggle to protect its religious and cultural distinctive against the invasion of Hellenistic and Roman values. But was the Abrahamic ideal of extending the blessing of the worship of God to all nations really lost in his version of an obsessively exclusive and ethnic early Judaism? Is this not a too simplistic view of the sectarian Judaism? Can the polemic in the Gospels be taken as an absolute systematic treatment of the overall theological programme of early Judaism? It reminds of the warning of Meier (1999:467) that one cannot "repeat the caricatures of Judaism that used to make it the perfect foil of Jesus or Christianity. One is instead challenged to explain where on the complex and confusing map of first-century Judaism one intends to locate Jesus".

Moreover, the prophetic nature of the ministry of Jesus remains unclear in the work of Borg. Borg (1994:26–28) describes Jesus as a "prophet", "social prophet" and "wisdom prophet" without really distinguishing what the differences may be between these categories. At best, it can be suggested that Borg views Jesus as a sort of sectarian prophet. In other words, Jesus the prophet radically challenged other Jewish sectarian views on the nature of God, and the programme they promoted for

the renewal of Israel. The Jesus movement became a Jewish social sect, and vied with the other sectarian movement for theological and cultural dominance in early Roman Palestine. And in this inter-sectarian conflict the Jesus movement flourished. In later work of Borg, the definition of Jesus as prophet moves towards a social prophet (Borg & Wright 1999:71). But for Borg the function of Jesus as a social prophet was still linked to a mystical experience of God — which led to an outcry against injustice. “They were God-intoxicated advocates for social justice”.

In summary, the application of the work of Borg to this dissertation is the focused discussion on the theological vision of the Jesus movement. This is a particular important point (even should the prioritisation of the concepts around holiness not enjoy the same status in this dissertation). The point is that the Jesus movement had an exceptionally strong religious conviction. This was not merely a social or political movement. Rather they were driven by the theological vision of the nature of God. In this sense, having a firm grasp on Luke’s theological vision is apt when approaching Luke’s perspective on the social conflict in early Roman Palestine.

### 2.2.3 N.T. WRIGHT: JESUS AS MESSIANIC PROPHET

Wright agrees with Borg that Jesus served as a movement initiator (Borg & Wright 1999:38). For Horsley (§ 3.2.4) such a description of Jesus as a movement initiator would best be served with categorising Jesus as a popular prophet. Both Borg and Wright describes Jesus (among other categories) as a prophet. But where Borg sees Jesus’ vision of God as central to his movement message, Wright sees Jesus’ moment in the history of Israel as central to his message. For Wright, the twin theological tenants of Judaism of the supreme monotheism of God, and the election of Israel as a covenantal people, gives rise to an eschatological view. This eschatological view is taken by Wright to be: “the belief that history is going somewhere, that something will happen through which everything will be put right” (Wright & Borg 1999:32). In the ripe anticipation of a decisive act of God, Jesus leads a movement that proclaims that, “YHWH, Israel’s God, was now at last becoming king” (Wright & Borg 1999:33). This means that the people of God would finally return from the Exile. It appears that Wright uses the Old Testament motif of the Exile as a metaphor for the powerlessness of the Jewish people, and the

suffering they are undergoing (Wright 1996:29). But it is also metaphor for the hope among the people of God. Exile implies the possibility of a return to the true Israel.

Wright (1996:164–168) follows the categories proposed by Webb for prophets during Second Temple Judaism. He argues that Jesus was unlikely to be a clerical prophet (he did not hold a particular office within the religio-political machinery of early Roman Palestine); nor a sapiential prophet (no conclusive textual evidence can be given that he belonged to a particular Jewish sect like the Essenes). Wright places Jesus within the group of leadership prophets. This means that Jesus as a prophet led a movement shaped by his teachings and symbolic actions.

Furthermore, Wright sides with the apocalyptic prophetic view of Jesus as articulated by Schweitzer. Wright proposes one major caveat with the Schweitzer hypothesis: Jewish apocalypticism does not refer to a catastrophic end of history and the world (as per the Schweitzer hypothesis), but rather that an imminent act of God is due within the existing historical timeline (Wright 1996:208–209). God is to restore the world to his original intent and rule, not summarily annihilate the world. This implied that the covenant with Israel would be renewed, that creation itself would be healed and restored, and that God would return as the rightful ruler. This prophetic declaration demands urgent action on the part of the hearer in order to prepare for this divine act. In that sense then the essence of the actions and teachings of Jesus was the nearness of the Kingdom of God.

Wright does not separate the proclamation and praxis of Jesus from the Israelite prophetic tradition. Rather he proposes that Jesus followed the example of a wide array of the Old Testament prophets. It boils down to the expectation that a prophet proclaims messages from a covenantal God, and confronts people with the foolishness of their ways, calling them to a different way of life, and fully expecting them to bear the consequences of their actions. In the grand tradition of the Israelite prophets he took a stand against the ruling elite: like Jeremiah he proclaimed the destruction of the Temple, and stood trial for that announcement. Like Elijah he confronts a perceived faithlessness among his hearers, and announced divine wrath. Like Jonah he would provide a sign in three days for the impending judgment on Jerusalem (Wright 1996:165–168).

As a popular leadership prophet, Jesus was mighty in word and deed and thereby gained a following for his apocalyptic message (Wright 1996:168). “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Lk 24:19, NRSV). As for the “word” component of his prophetic ministry, Jesus built an itinerant preaching ministry mainly in rural Galilee (avoiding city centres like Sepphoris and Tiberias). As for the “deed” component of his prophetic ministry, Jesus followed a healing programme, enacted various symbolic gestures that referred back to earlier Israelite tradition (such as baptism). He also gathered followers around him and shaped a new community with them that could be described as a “reconstituted Israel”. Luke names this new community “a little flock” in Luke 12:32 — which reminds strongly of the metaphoric nomenclature of Israel in the prophetic traditions. The prophet Jesus followed an agenda for Israel (not a mere set of timeless teachings), that sought to prepare and change the true Israel by means of a praxis (way of living), stories and symbols.

For Wright (1996:171), the main quality of Jesus as a leadership prophet was that he spoke and acted with authority. There was a certain urgency that other leadership prophets in this period of time did not possess. He did not merely repeat earlier Israelite prophetic traditions, or formed a new school of thought, but the content of his message challenged the existing ideology because it had credentials as an authentic message from God. Luke records the shock value of Jesus’ authority with descriptions like: “They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, ‘What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!’” (Lk 4:36, NRSV).

Where Wright excels is in the description of the methodology of Jesus. Jesus as a prophet applies symbols, stories and establishes a praxis that formulates a programme for the renewal of Israel. Furthermore, Wright connects the message of Jesus with the message of the earlier Israelite prophets. Jesus follows the template of the earlier Israelite prophets, but also extends the main message of the prophets. For Wright, this main message is the very exile of Israel and the proclamation of its return from the Exile. Jesus became a prophet that announced the return from the Exile. This means that the land is now being restored (as evidenced by the healing

miracles done by Jesus), family is now redefined (fictive kinship<sup>23</sup> is elevated above actual kinship by loyalty to Jesus), the Torah is reinterpreted (by discourses such as the Sermon of the Mount), and the Temple is to be rebuilt.

For Wright, this message of the return from the Exile is the central concept of the Kingdom message. He also develops a higher Christology than the other authors reviewed here. The Kingdom is centred around Jesus; Jesus is more than a prophet. It may be stated that he is a messianic prophet that proclaims the Kingdom, of which he is the central figure. “Jesus, then, believed himself to be the focal point of the people of YHWH, the returned-from-exile people, the people of the renewed covenant, the people whose sins were now forgiven. He embodied what he had announced” (Wright 1996:538). Jesus the apocalyptic prophet proclaims the imminence of the Kingdom of God, and establishes that kingdom by his death. The task is now left to his followers to implement the tasks that the Kingdom sets before them (Wright 1996:660). Wright emphasises not so much the covenantal principles that leads to a more just society, but rather the decisive act of the covenantal God that reveals who that covenantal God is. And that revelation of God requires a more just society as a response. This act of God leads to the mission of the Jesus movement.

In summary, the application of the work of Wright to this dissertation lies not so much in his elevated Christology, but in the way Wright links the discourses, praxis and symbolic actions with the line of Israelite traditions. Whereas Borg provides an example of the centrality of the theological message of the historical Jesus, Wright provides an example of how to locate the historical Jesus within the line of traditions and history of Israel. So, in order to describe the message and programme of Jesus,

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<sup>23</sup> “Actual” kinship refers to biological kin, whereas “fictive” kinship refers to the application of kinship to non-biological (or familial) relationships such as patron-client relationships. By adding a kinship component to a non-biological relationship, an emphasis is placed on the ascendancy of that relationship. This is especially true in societies with a strong group (or collectivistic) identity. The naming convention of “fictive kinship” follows from Elliott (1991), Hanson and Oakman (1996) and Malina (2001). The naming convention of “actual kinship” follows from Malina (2001). However, it is unfortunate that “fictive” is semantically associated with “fictional” or “untrue”. It is not the intent in the dissertation to depict fictive kinship as fictional relationships. It is merely a way of denoting where kinship is added to non-biological relationships to indicate the primacy of those relationships.

not only is it important to locate Jesus within theological streams of early Roman Palestine; but it is also important to locate the historical Jesus within the meta-narrative of Israel — and how he fits into that narrative. For Wright, Jesus can be located as a prophet who announces the return from the Exile. In other words, he locates him in the prophetic traditions of Israel; and the restoration of the monarchy under God. It is important to determine the intertextual links with both the prophetic and covenantal ideals of Israelite tradition.

#### 2.2.4 R. HORSLEY: JESUS AS SOCIAL PROPHET

The social environment of early Roman Palestine features strongly in the formulation of Horsley's view of the historical Jesus. Where other authors often start off with the prophetic role of Jesus, and then adds other possible roles of Jesus (such as teacher or holy man), Horsley keeps the ministry of Jesus within the lane of the prophetic. The categories that Horsley and Hanson (1985:135) suggests for early Roman Palestine prophets resembles the categories of Webb. They suggest that the popular prophets that arose among the peasantry could be divided between oracular and action prophets. Oracular prophets announced impending doom or redemption from God. Action prophets instigated and led popular movements, which aimed at participating in an imminent redemptive act of God. But Wright prefers the categories of Webb, since figures like Jesus and John the Baptist (who could be categorised as action prophets in the framework of Horsley and Hanson) also provided discourses and not just symbolic actions that led a movement. Wright (1996:154) finds the divide between the categories of action and oracular prophets too artificial. Horsley and Hanson (1985:139) trace the function of the prophets from formative Old Testament figures (such as Moses and Samuel) who served as messengers, who "communicated the will of Yahweh to king and people in oracular form". They served as the leaders of socio-political movements that strove for the political and social emancipation of Israel (and by extension the non-elite). Action prophets in early Roman Palestine therefore harken back to the liberation movements of the formative Israelite tradition. Oracular prophets find their foundational roots in the classical literary prophets of the eighth and ninth century BCE, who, no longer finding themselves in socio-political offices like a Moses or Samuel, acted as messengers of God to admonish the Judean and Israelite elite. Horsley places the ministry of Jesus

within the grouping of the popular action prophet, which is to say that the aim of Jesus was to lead a movement that anticipated a redemptive act of God, and the liberation of the non-elite from social injustice.

Horsley introduces a strong cross-disciplinary strand to his understanding of the prophetic ministry of Jesus. In particular, he applies the socio-political theories of Scott. Scott examined the south-eastern Asian peasantry, and proposed that the peasantry had an overwhelming need for a “politics of dignity” (Scott 1990:18–19). This yearning for a politics of dignity is shaped by the constant injustice that the peasantry faced. This desire for justice lead to a vision for an alternate society where justice is found in the distribution of resources — as opposed to the extraction of resources that is enforced on the peasantry. However, due to their relative powerlessness, they are forced to keep this vision of an alternate society among themselves as a “hidden transcript”. This secrecy was due to the fear of reprisals from the elite. The opposite of the hidden transcript is the “public transcript”, which consists of the ideologies that enables the elite to exert their power over the peasantry.

For Horsley, the theories of Scott are a good fit to the non-elite context of the Galilean ministry of Jesus, as well as to the social function of prophets in early Roman Palestine. Jesus did most of his ministry in the setting of the Galilean villages because a hidden transcript requires space and some measure of isolation from the political elite to develop. In this sense Jesus uses the villages as a base, not only because they are the basic social form in advanced agrarian economies, but because momentum is generated there for the hidden transcript of the Jesus movement. And the martyrdom of Jesus serves as a catalyst for the movement; his message of covenantal renewal is advanced by his death.

Horsley sees the historical Jesus as predominantly a prophet for social change in the tradition of the earlier Israelite prophets. The key to the hypothesis of Horsley is the emphasis on “social”: Jesus ministers not in an idealist sense (not to promote a set of religious ideals about the Temple, the law etc.) but rather ministers in a materialist sense (the concrete change in social environment of early Roman Palestine). Furthermore “social” means that Jesus promoted social change from a grass roots

level, as opposed to a “political” movement (which is defined by Horsley as societal change initiated by the elite). Horsley rejects the description of the historical Jesus as an apocalyptic (or eschatological) prophet, and describes Jesus as a prophet that generated and led a movement that was aimed at the covenantal renewal of Israel (Horsley 2012: Chapter 5 [Kindle edition]). The discourse of Jesus the social prophet was a hidden transcript with a vision of an alternate Israel. This alternate Israel was to be a more just society, where the original intention of the covenant is renewed and implemented and every man can sit under his “own vine and fig tree” (Mic 4:4). This movement competed with the ruling elite.

The praxis of the Jesus movement was the social revolution of Israel through the renewal and restoration of non-elite villages. These villages were the main social entity in early Roman Palestine. This renewal would stem from egalitarian principles found in the Mosaic covenant. Horsley embarks on a programme of social interpretation of the Jesus sayings. The forgiveness of debt, giving up possessions, and lending without expecting repayment, becomes the economic basis of rebuilding the villages. “Loving one’s enemies” becomes a principle of solidarity within the village. The metaphorical Twelve, who judges the tribes, becomes a ruling principle whereby judging can better be translated as the dispensation of true justice and the liberation of non-elite villages. In this alternate vision, villages become autonomous communities where covenantal solidarity is cherished (Horsley 1993:255–273).

The appeal of the hypotheses of Horsley is that it describes the social environment of early Roman Palestine exceptionally well. The Jesus movement is placed within the social phenomenon of popular movements in early Roman Palestine. Jesus does not present himself as an ageless sage proclaiming abstract truths irrelevant to the severe social challenges his followers faced. The message of the Jesus movement is not an elevated religious discourse; Jesus interacts with the social conditions that he faced. Furthermore, he keeps the ministry of Jesus within the ambit of a prophet. Where the appeal of the work of Borg is how he keeps the line clear as to the theological essence of the ministry of Jesus of mercy, Horsley keeps the role of Jesus in focus and does not jump between categories as the textual data presents itself.

However, Horsley's persistent presentation of Jesus as a social prophet reduces some elements of the ministry and teachings of Jesus. It is hard to imagine that the later global reach of the Jesus movement would stem only from something so specific to the societal ills of early Roman Palestine only. It is more likely that the theological message of Jesus had a more universal appeal that had socio-political implications within early Roman Palestine. To accept the hypothesis of Horsley that Jesus was a social prophet programmatically focused on the renewal of peasant villages in early Roman Palestine, is to expect later proponents of the Jesus movement to have divine-like ability to re-interpret the message of Jesus for a global appeal.

In summary, the work of Horsley is applicable to this dissertation in how he intersects social models with the historical and textual worlds of the historical Jesus. He sets a course that navigates such varying entities as social models, history and textual data well. This dissertation will also be heavily reliant on socio-scientific models that are formulated from social models and textual data.

#### 2.2.5 SUMMARY: THE HISTORICAL JESUS AS PROPHET

In summary, the body of work examined here focuses on research pertaining to the historical Jesus. Although this category is very diverse and varying, the authors selected here describe the prophetic aspect of the ministry of Jesus, or at least the social concerns of the historical Jesus. These authors agree that the historical Jesus should be located firmly within first century Palestine and early Judaism. This is hardly surprising since they are all proponents of the Third Quest. There is some agreement concerning the eschatological views of the historical Jesus. It is taken that the *eschaton* is an unfolding of history, not the end of it. And that the *eschaton* refers to a decisive act of God that will have social consequences for Israel. Of the authors Sanders is probably the closest to Schweitzer, and Horsley gives the least of attention to the eschatological views of Schweitzer.

All four authors also agree that the prophetic was key to the ministry and message of the historical Jesus, but disagrees about the crux of that prophetic ministry. For Sanders, the historical Jesus is an eschatological prophet who decries the Temple,

and predicts the replacement of the Temple with the messianic age. For Borg, the theological message of the prophet Jesus competes with other Jewish social sects — and provides a radical reinterpretation of the programme of holiness that seems central to the other Jewish sects in the Gospel polemics. For Wright, the prophet Jesus picks up the mantle of the Israelite prophets, and declares the return from exile to the rule of God. Lastly, Horsley keeps Jesus firmly within the ambit of a social prophet — his concern is social and he expects social justice for the peasantry of early Roman Palestine.

### **2.3 PRESUPPOSITIONS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW**

Presuppositions from existing research should create an informed starting point, and lay a foundation to build on in approaching the central research question — how did Lukan prophetic discourse interact with social conflict in early Roman Palestine? The following basic presuppositions are made from the reviewed work of the above authors, and build on some of the basic presuppositions already made in Chapter 1.

Social conflict during early Roman Palestine acted as a social driver for the Jesus movement. The discourse of the Jesus movement addressed social conflict (among other things), and gave compelling solutions. In this sense, social conflict aided the growth of the Jesus movement. Social conflict remains a contextual factor in interpreting Lukan discourses. This means that the Lukan discourse should not be separated from its social-narrative context. To be fair, the difficulty here is that the author of Luke-Act was probably geographically and chronologically removed from social conflict in early Roman Palestine. This inevitably asks questions of the historical reliability of the Lukan text. How applicable is the actual and historical social context to the Lukan discourse itself? Nevertheless, the narrative and discourse of Luke is framed within this social conflict and geography of early Roman Palestine. To divorce it from its social context is to create a vacuum that the researcher would have to fill with meaning. And that is not ideal for research. It is argued here that Luke provided a particular theological perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine — whether it is historically verifiable or not. The actual social conditions provided the soil for the narrative and discourse to develop and spread beyond early Roman Palestine. It is from these accounts that Luke compiles

his own (Lk 1:1–4). Ultimately, the Lukan narrative and discourse has to be read within the social context that it aims to describe. To do otherwise is to mute Luke's theology on social conflict.

The Gospels present Jesus as a prophet who worked towards the Kingdom renewal of Israel. It is not argued here that Jesus was limited to the role of a prophet, only that he did act as a prophet. The nature of his teachings is prophetic discourse aimed at the covenantal renewal of Israel. This prophetic discourse was formulated by a particular vision of YHWH. Central to understanding to the message of Jesus is his vision of the nature of God. Jesus perceived himself as a messenger with an urgent message for a certain timeframe for Israel. There was a real expectation of a divine act — an eschatological act. This led to the proclamation of the Kingdom. It is assumed here that this eschatological act had social consequences in a historical sense, and expected a changed social environment — not a suspension, or annihilation — of history. This anticipated change in social environment had strong covenantal overtones. It reflected the covenantal ideals of justice.

This vision of the renewal of Israel was antagonistic toward the Judean political elite. Although no approval was given to the Roman empire, the nature of conflict in the Gospels was predominantly inter-sectarian and intra-Jewish. Perhaps the reason for this was that the Jesus movement envisioned a strong religious platform for the renewal of Israel. In this case, inter-sectarian and intra-Jewish conflict was more likely. Furthermore, the notion that the Jesus movement was social in its aims, with reform driven from a grass roots level is important. The Jesus movement was a popular non-elite movement.

As a popular leadership prophet, Jesus instigated and led a popular mass movement. This movement was generated by a programme instituted by Jesus. The programme existed of discourses that contained stories, advocated an alternative social pattern, and used subversive symbolic actions. Discourse is assumed to refer to the use of language to order and cohere the collective action of a social group (including the Jesus movement). The aim of a discourse is either to affirm the values of the existing ideology of a particular society (orthology), or to challenge and disturb the existing ideology (heterology). Though researchers differ on the

meaning of the Lukan prophetic discourses, they agree that Luke took a strong stance against the rich/poor divide; offered a withering critique of the abuse and hoarding of resources in early Roman Palestine; and formulated several theological statements and social patterns as an answer to the rich/poor divide.

These Lukan discourses strongly challenged and disturbed the existing ideologies in early Roman Palestine. Lukan prophetic discourse reflects the linguistic/theological framework for the early Jerusalem church that challenged and unsettled the social order instilled by Roman imperial policies. Although Jesus had an itinerant ministry, there was a strong focus on the renewal of villages (and later cities) in Luke-Acts. Lukan prophetic discourse instigated subversive and alternate social patterns (or praxes). These new social patterns undermined political realities (such as the prevailing views on patronage), and economic practices (such as view on surplus of resources and generosity). These social patterns directly challenged and subverted socio-political structures on a theological basis. In Acts, the proclamation of the Kingdom, and the social patterns of the Jesus movement, led to the founding of sectarian communities. These sectarian communities, for example the early Jerusalem church, were contrast societies (in the terminology of Lohfink [1982:72]). In other words, the early church envisioned and advocated a renewed society by embodying a contrast society to the existing one in early Roman Palestine (and beyond). These sectarian communities were shaped and driven by the prophetic discourses (the proclamation of the Good News); and the social patterns it sought to install (the life of discipleship).

### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

(Lk 1:1–4, NRSV)

Just as Luke wrote an “orderly account” after he investigated “everything carefully” (Lk 1:3, NRSV), the researcher has to demonstrate how he or she will proceed to examine the relevant textual sources. The selected research methodology will be described, and critically discussed, in this chapter. The aim of this chapter is both to clarify the methods which will be utilised in this dissertation and how data will be gained from the text, and to describe how that data will be interpreted. The particular strengths and weaknesses of the selected methodology will be briefly explored as well.

In short, this dissertation will employ both the socio-scientific and socio-rhetoric method of exegesis, but during different phases of the research. More specifically, the socio-scientific method will be applied by means of the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013). The model will aid the identification of the appropriate pericopes of prophetic discourse during the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus in Luke. Furthermore, it will provide a way of categorising the various ideologies<sup>24</sup> of the conflicting social

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<sup>24</sup> Broadly speaking “ideology” can be defined as an “integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values (in terms of the symbolic universe), a network of themes and ideas (in terms of the text), representing an interpretation of the social reality (the macrosocial world of the text) intended to have meaning within a particular context (the microsocial world of the text)” (van Eck 2001:598). Although the definition of van Eck offers a thorough explanation of the possible scope of ideology, it does not fully express the importance of such integrated systems of belief and values on the social groups in conflict in early Roman Palestine.

groups and agents in these discourses. In other words, this socio-scientific model will be utilised as a heuristic tool. The socio-rhetoric method will then be used to exegete the selected pericopes. Socio-rhetorical criticism is employed as the exegetical method to derive meaningful conclusions concerning Luke's theological perspective on social conflict.

### 3.1 THE SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The social-scientific method came to the fore in the 1970s. It developed as a result of a growing awareness of how the dominant historical-critical method leaves gaps within its findings. The historical-critical method tends to be "incommensurate with the intention of the texts" (Herzog 1992:760–766). This means it draws on the ideology of objectivism, it limits the kind of questions that could be asked of the text (since the method creates boundaries to those questions), and it diminishes interaction with the community for which those texts were intended. Lastly, it is often unable to adapt to historical changes, and therefore always prone to anachronism. A singular application of the historical-critical method creates a deficiency in examining how the text interacted with its socio-cultural context. In contrast to the historical-critical method, the socio-scientific critical method can be defined as follows:

Social-scientific criticism of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the cultural and social dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models and research of the social sciences.

(Elliott 1993:7)

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Here a definition of ideology by van Staden is of value: an ideology is "a system of belief and values that is used consciously or subconsciously to maintain or further the interest of a specific group" (van Staden 1991:72; Malina 1986:178). The importance, therefore, of an ideology for a social group is how it maintains and propagates various beliefs and values of that specific group. Ideology offers important insight into the origin, aims and direction of a social group as a social entity.

Both historical criticism and social-scientific criticism is a form of exegetical study. But historical criticism focuses on the “historical, literary and ideational issues” observed within the text (Van Aarde 2002:421). Historical criticism focuses on the progression of events within a historical timeframe. It examines the interaction between history and the applicable religious texts. It is focused on historical worlds and the social description of those worlds. It tends to explore what happened “when” and “where”. It excels at describing “individual actors, extraordinary actions, distinctive properties, personal relationship and on the diachronic change of these aspects in the texts” (van Eck 2001:595). It goes to reason that in the exploring of the unfolding of the historical in a linear fashion, historical criticism tends to be less focused on the cross-sectional nature of the social context of that particular historical world.

Social-scientific criticism on the other hand has more of a phenomenological approach: it tends to study and describe what happens again and again. It takes a cross-sectional view at the social context of a historical world. Social-scientific criticism utilises the social sciences in its exegetical task. Social sciences are that division of modern science that focuses on the study of human societies, social systems and their component parts, social behaviour, and social processes. It includes disciplines such as social anthropology, ethnology, history, economics, politics and archaeology. Therefore, its methods and models lay a good foundation for the aims of the socio-scientific method (Elliott 1993:17–19). The socio-scientific method examines text in the light of its social context. It describes how the text interacts with its social context. Elliott (1993:13) defines the scope of social-scientific criticism as:

...the interrelation of texts and social contexts, ideas and communal behaviour, social realities and their religious symbolization, belief systems and cultural systems and ideologies as a whole, and the relation of such cultural systems to the natural and social environment, economic organization, social structures and political power.

By posing the data and research questions in new ways to enhance the exegesis of the text, the socio-scientific method provides a framework with the use of social

models. Where historical criticism predominantly follows the line of historical development, and how historical concerns interact with the text, socio-scientific criticism takes a cross-sectional view within a certain historical period and studies the interaction and connection between a society and its historical context — how the society is responding at a given time to the historical challenges of its day. As van Eck (2009: 315) describes it:

Social-scientific criticism approaches texts from the premise that the historical contexts of texts have further social dimensions than only “that what was going on when and where”. From a social-scientific point of view, the contexts of texts also refer to social behaviour involving two or more persons, social groups, social institutions, social systems and patterns and codes of sociality.

The socio-scientific method provides two foci, namely the use of social sciences to construct models and theories by which to analyse the text, and to clarify and explore the rhetorical effect of the text within its social environment (van Eck 2001:595–596).

### 3.1.1 SOCIAL MODELS AND THE SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

A researcher consciously or subconsciously holds a wide collection of values and presuppositions shaped by his or her own cultural and ideological environment. This opens the research to the twin dangers of anachronism and ethnocentrism: if the institutional and cultural norms of the researcher are different from those of the society studied, the researcher may misinterpret the available data. The researcher may read aspects of his or her own cultural and institutional milieu into the data. Even with the use of social models, a researcher runs the risk of working in an anachronistic way — since the models are shaped by researchers in the here and now. This links with the bigger issue of presuppositions that drive the research. The researcher operates within a framework of certain assumptions by which he or she approaches the research question. This framework is provided by the shared meaning of the social system which the researcher finds himself or herself in (Malina 1996:236). The presuppositions of the researcher create a perspective or view on

the available data. The ideal is absolute objectivity, but this is not possible, or even reasonable in research. It is important that the researcher evaluate and stipulate his or her presuppositions when approaching the textual data.<sup>25</sup>

Hence the need arises to formulate accurately the emic and etic perspectives of the data studied. Emic data refers to the first-hand experience of the indigenous themselves. Data consists of the “what” and the “how” of their experiences. In the case of Biblical exegesis, the emic perspective is contained in the Biblical text. The etic perspective of the data is the perspective of the observer or researcher of the emic data (the “why” of the experiences of the society studied). The data that the emic perspective provides, may require the use of models to aid a more objective interpretation (the etic perspective) of the data (Elliott 1993:38). Models aid this goal by providing a framework that is distilled from social phenomena. It provides a guide that helps keeping the emic data in its social context. In the words of Malina (2001:18): “Models are abstract, simplified representations of more complex, real-world objects and interactions. Like abstract thought, the purpose of models is to enable and facilitate understanding”. This means that models are not social reality itself, but a conceptual framework that depicts social reality. Models achieve this by distilling the important concepts that underpins social reality. In the process models become simplified representations of social realities. As Freyne (1995:24) describes it: “models can never encapsulate the whole of life in all its complexity, but rather select and highlight certain key aspects, which after careful reflection are deemed to be crucial in understanding the whole”.

The use of models is important. It prevents the researcher from drowning in a myriad of details that the data may present, as well as the myriad of possibilities that the etic perspective of the data may present. Social models provide selectivity in choosing the appropriate data. This selectivity is important, because the amount data available to the researcher may obscure what is important for the research. A social model aids the researcher to select what is the most important and applicable data to the

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<sup>25</sup> The basic presuppositions in this dissertation will be stipulated both concerning the research methodology (§ 3.3), as well as presuppositions derived from the literature review (§ 2.3).

chosen research question. The use of models furthermore reduces the subjective reading of data in an inductive study.<sup>26</sup> Since appropriate models guide the interpretation of the data, the significance of the data is given its due place within the framework of the model. Although the model does not lessen the importance of the correct interpretation by the researcher, it does decrease the onus on the researcher to give meaning to a wide array of data without the aid of a guiding framework. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the use of particular social models reflects the presuppositions and philosophical foundation of the researcher. It aids in providing a transparent insight into the approach of the researcher. It allows critical evaluation of the framework used to interpret the data, and hence gives a platform for greater accuracy when interpreting data.

Although models provide insight into the presuppositions of the researcher, care should still be taken in the use of models — exactly because a measure of personal judgment is involved with the development (and application) thereof. Above all, the fit of the model should be considered in relation to the research question. The fit of a model is determined by how applicable the model is to the particular textual data. Care should be taken not to merely superimpose a model on textual data in a predetermined fashion. According to Craffert (2001:21–42), the following weaknesses of models should also be taken into account when doing research: the use of models may produce a narrow set of boundaries that predetermine the outcome of the interpretation of the data. Once the model is in use it holds the data in an “iron law of perspective” of what falls within its domain and what should be excluded. Important data may be excluded because the model dismisses it. The many presuppositions that drive the field of sociology may also produce many

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<sup>26</sup> With inductive theory testing, all data are collected before a theory is formulated. Conversely, with deductive theory testing, a theory is formulated, and then tested with data. Mostly in research, both the deductive and inductive theory testing is used: collected data tests and refines an existing theory (Bell 2009:32). This dissertation follows an inductive study more closely. Data is examined (Lukan prophetic discourse) to formulate a theory on the interaction between Lukan discourse and social conflict in early Roman Palestine. However, in an inductive study, data is still not examined in an ideological vacuum. The reading of data is subjective because of the existing presuppositions of the researcher. Hence models are important in reading the data. Models moderate the subjective views of the researcher, and offers insight into the presuppositions of the researcher concerning the conclusions that he or she make.

models that can be applicable to a research question. Where the researcher faces a vast array of data without the aid of models, now a researcher faces a vast array of models that creates confusion when it comes to interpretation. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that system theories and models are weak in determining causation, but that they assist in clarifying interrelationships between social phenomena. This is because the method used with social models is cross-sectional, whereas the historical critical method is linear. With cross-sectional (sociological) studies the connection and relationship between phenomena and events is studied, but with linear (historical) studies the unfolding of one event upon another is studied. These include chronology as well as causative relations. So, when using social models, interrelation rather than causation, should be pursued.

Herzog (1992:760–766) describes two further dangers with the use of social models in exegesis. How can data prudently be extracted from texts by socio-scientific means if it was not written with the goal of delivering social data? Would textual data actually give meaningful results when viewed through the lens of social models? Lastly, an allegation that can be levelled at the socio-scientific method is that it tends to be reductionist: the method may be applied in such a way that all of theology is explained away by sociologic and anthropological causes. In the process theology becomes a product of social forces. Herzog (1992:760–766), like Malina, counters these dangers by lauding the self-awareness these models provide. It is inevitable that an interpreter brings some contemporary model of sorts (whether social or from another discipline) into the work of interpretation. But being self-aware of the chosen model, and how it fits with the research question, provides a control of sorts that keeps the researcher from extravagant claims. In terms of the danger that the social sciences cause a reductionist approach to the text, Herzog counters that ideas do not develop in vacuums. The social sciences provide perspectives on social context of the Biblical authors and people. And Biblical texts are written in a social context.

Malina (2001:18) recognises that models cannot ultimately be proven right or wrong since they are hypothetical. Rather, inaccuracy and superficiality has to be avoided in the representation of reality by the model. This implies a critical and self-critical use of models. The critical use of models examines the formation of the model. If the model does not reflect the data accurately the interpretive results of the research will

be misguided as well. The self-critical use of models is to adjust and improve the model as it is applied to the data (Craffert 2001:23). Both the opportunities and dangers require serious thought from the prospective researcher. In an attempt to draw on the positives of the socio-scientific method, and avoid dangers posed, this dissertation will employ the socio-scientific method by means of the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) in a heuristic way.<sup>27</sup> The model will assist in asking new questions of the text concerning social conflict, identifying ideologies and parties to this conflict in the text, and categorising areas of conflict in various social domains. However, once the applicable pericopes have been identified and categorised, the task of further exegesis will rely on the socio-rhetorical method.

### **3.2 THE SOCIO-RHETHORICAL METHOD**

Socio-rhetorical exegesis is “a multi-dimensional approach to texts guided by a multi-dimensional hermeneutic. Rather than being one more method for interpreting texts, socio-rhetorical interpretation is an interpretive analytic” (Robbins 2010:192). Socio-rhetorical exegesis employs various methods and stratagems to examine the internal interaction within the text itself (called the inner texture), as well as the external interaction of the text by means of intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, as well as sacred texture. The socio-rhetorical method offers an umbrella approach where interpretive stratagems of various disciplines are housed and allowed to interact with each other.

In some sense the development of the socio-rhetorical method is an inevitable outflow from other recent critical methods. According to van Eck (2001:593), the two dominant emerging methodologies are narrative criticism and socio-scientific criticism. Narrative criticism recognises that the narrative world (the text) is employed as a vehicle of communication between the actual author and the actual reader. Various strategies are used by the actual author to maximise the efficiency of this

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<sup>27</sup> See Addendum A for an illustration of the model, and § 3.4 for a description of its main features.

communication. Strategies include an implied author (or narrator), an implied reader and plot. The implied reader assists the actual reader to identify with the viewpoints of the actual author (see § 5.5.4). The plot drives the narrative, as well as the relationship between the implied author and implied reader. However, one of the most important factors of narrative criticism is the ideology of the author. The ideological goal of the author is to reinforce the ideology of the reader (if the same as the author's ideology), or to disturb and unsettle the ideology of the reader (should it differ). Narrative criticism thus seeks to understand the world of the author's ideology, how that is structurally reflected in the texts, and which strategies are employed to have the intended effect upon the symbolic world of the implied reader.

But, when the goals of narrative criticism are compared to the analytic questions of socio-scientific criticism, some of their perspective goals appear to be related — and even convergent. This means that, although the approach of narrative criticism and socio-scientific criticism differs, they may potentially have some kind of mutualism. For example, Elliott (1991:xxiv–xxv) lists the analytic questions of socio-scientific criticism as follows: who are the implied readers in the text, and how are their social profile depicted? What is the reflection of the social situation presented and what reactions are given (in other words how does the text interact with the social situation)? What are the author's diagnoses and analysis of the particular social situation? And lastly, who produced the body of text (as implied from explicit or implicit information from the text)? These analytic questions appear close to those of narrative criticism.

These two approaches can be integrated without having to lose the contributions made by each. Although seeming divergent in their approach, these two methodologies gain much in terms of their integration. As Tannehill (1997:132) comments: ancient texts made sense not only because of literary strategies employed by the various authors, but also by having access to the "extratext". Extratext (as defined by Tannehill) refers to the body of knowledge containing language codes, literary conventions, social codes and conventions and cultural "scripts". And the socio-scientific method provides much depth in gauging the extratext. It is in the integration of narrative criticism and socio-scientific criticism that socio-rhetorical interpretation takes hold. In other words, socio-rhetorical

interpretation becomes a serious effort to house various interpretive strategies and become an overarching framework of sorts (Robbins 1996b:1). “The socio-rhetorical interpretation of biblical texts can therefore be seen as a combination of a literary critical reading (narratological) and a social-scientific reading of the text, concentrating on the text's situation and strategy, as well as on the intended communication of the text as social force and social product” (Van Eck 2001:608).

To this end Robbins proposes a framework of “textures”. Textures can be described as cohesive array of data within the text that form a particular sort of interface that can interact with other interfaces (or textures). Robbins (1996b:18) uses the analogy of a thick tapestry to describe how different interfaces are weaved together to create an internal world within the text, but also interact with the extratextual world. When viewed from different angles, different patterns and configurations appear that contributes to the totality of the visual effect of the tapestry. Likewise, a text contains different textures that, when viewed from different interpretive angles, provide patterns of interaction that contribute to the totality of the intended message of the text.

These textures include: the inner texture which explores the linguistic patterns of the text, and how these patterns attempt to convince the reader of its intended aims (Robbins 1996b:27–36). The intertexture explores how the particular text interacts with other texts (such as citations, allusions and reconfigurations of other texts). Social and cultural texture examines how the text interacts with the culture and society by using the predominant cultural and societal values, symbols, attitudes and norms to either affirm or subvert those cultural and societal phenomena. Much of the social and cultural texture has to do with symbols and symbolic actions, and how these symbols/symbolic actions are in dialogue to each other to determine social and cultural values. Ideological texture exhibits the ideological position of the actual and implied author, and how those ideological positions relate to individuals and groups. This is true in particular when dealing with issue of power, and how power is used, established and challenged by the author. Lastly, and more recently, a sacred texture has been added. Sacred texture refers to the way the text communicates the intersection between the human and divine world, such as angelic beings, deity, holy

person, divine history and human redemption. Some propose that this texture should be viewed as a subset of the ideological texture (Gowler 2010:195).

The appeal of socio-rhetoric interpretation is not only that it provides an overarching framework for various interpretative strategies, but also that it becomes programmatic in the strategies that it employs (Gowler 2010:193). It is flexible enough to provide various angles of interpretations (whilst still maintaining a cohesive whole), but it also suggests various strategies to explore avenues within each angle of interpretation (or texture). Furthermore, it provides a flexible approach that seeks to interact with both the text and extratext, and explore the interaction between the narrative and sociological world of the text. However, the programmatic approach can become overwhelming should it all be applied to a broader array of pericopes. Not only can a wide array of the textures be applied on a particular pericope, but within each texture a portfolio of strategies can be applied to the pericope as well. Caution is required, lest the method overwhelms the research question as the scope of textual data becomes broader. This is of particular concern to this research question, which will examine more pericopes to satisfy the research question.

In response to this, Robbins (1996a:5–6) suggests a two-step approach to selected pericopes. During the first step, the exegete may apply the textures in a different order according to the given objectives of the research. For example, the exegete concerned about the danger of eisegesis, and sensitive to the rhetorical devices of the text, may wish to start with the inner texture. Likewise, the exegete concerned with historical criticism, may wish to start with the intertextual texture. In so doing they may compare known historical phenomena with the text itself. For the exegete concerned with the social and cultural dynamic of the texts, and wishes to make a sharp distinction between modern social and cultural dynamics compared with the original socio-cultural context of the text, may wish to start with the socio-cultural texture. For the exegete who wishes to examine the interplay between the text and the dominant ideologies of exegetes themselves, may wish to start with the ideological texture. In other words, the aims of the research determine the texture requiring emphasis. As a second step, Robbins recommends that two other textures should also be considered (rather than only applying the one most applicable

texture). In his opinion, two more textures should be considered to allow for the necessary depth in exegesis. This two-step approach maintains the flexibility of the socio-rhetorical method and ensures sufficient quality of depth of exegesis, yet keeps the exegetical task manageable for the researcher.

For the purposes and focus of this dissertation, it seems more prudent to predominantly (but not exclusively) focus on the socio-cultural texture and intertextual texture of the particular pericopes. The socio-cultural texture allows for a sufficient focus on the interplay between the text and socio-cultural concerns of the research question. The intertextual texture allows for an interplay between the text and historical and cultural points of connection with the extratext.

### **3.3 SUMMARY OF EXEGETICAL METHODOLOGY**

In summary, the research methodology will follow a three-step approach: the selected socio-scientific model will be utilised to identify the interaction of the Lukan prophetic discourse with social conflict. The socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) will be used as an instrument (a heuristic tool) to highlight social conflict, categorise the social groups involved (elite and non-elite), and their key ideologies. The outcome of this step will be mainly to identify key pericopes in the Lukan discourse. Furthermore, the model will be applied to highlight key ideological differences between the parties involved.

Socio-rhetorical exegesis will then be done on the key pericopes to closely examine them for meaning in relation to social conflict in early Roman Palestine. The main aim here is to derive basic conclusions of how the Jesus followers interacted with social conflict. It examines Luke's theological perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine. The key outcome of this step is to formulate basic statements on the theological perspective of Luke on social conflict.

Finally, Acts 1–7 will be examined for examples of the praxis of the early Jerusalem church. The aim of this is not to seek points of correlation (that the prophetic discourse caused the praxis of the early Jerusalem church) but rather to seek points

of comparison (how the exegetical conclusions compare with the praxis of the early Jerusalem church). The rationale here is to provide an additional layer of comparison to seek points of convergence (or divergence) with the findings of the exegesis of the prophetic discourse. This allows for a greater measure of accuracy when postulating on the interaction in Luke-Acts of the Jesus movement, the early Jerusalem church, and social conflict in early Roman Palestine.

### **3.4 THE MODEL OF THE INFLUENCE OF ROMAN IMPERIALISM ON SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

Key concepts of the social influence of Roman imperialism on early Roman Palestine are synthesised and illustrated by the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013). This model is illustrated in Addendum A. This model builds on basic presuppositions of the Oakman model of social interaction in early Roman Palestine (2008), which is based on the premises of social conflict theory (Addendum B). The Oakman model does not explore the development of the social interaction between the elite and non-elite, nor does it describe the influence of Roman imperial policies on the developing social conflict between the elite and non-elite. These gaps are filled by the proposed model. The following description of the model will serve as a brief summary of the key findings thereof (Jacobs 2013:176–180).

The model illustrates the widening chasm between the Judean elite and non-elite due to the contrasting key ideologies. The main emphasis of the model is to focus on the various social domains in early Roman Palestine, to clarify both how the key ideologies varied between the elite and non-elite, and to postulate how Roman imperialism influenced that particular social domain. The model is illustrated with the use of levels, grey blocks, and white blocks. The model has a vertical and horizontal component. The horizontal component is depicted by the white and grey blocks. The white blocks are of various sizes. Each of these represents certain social values, as well as the level of influence of those social values on the particular group (as illustrated by the size of the white block). The vertical component suggests a hierarchy of importance of how the elite and non-elite prioritised the key ideologies of the various social domains. This hierarchy is illustrated on the model by means of

arrows. This is done in an effort to incorporate the embedded nature of social domains in early Roman Palestine — without losing the distinct focus on contrasting key ideologies between the elite and non-elite.

As noted in § 3.1.1, a social model is a simplified representation of social reality that provides a heuristic framework for research. The model is not social or historical reality itself. It is merely illustrative. This is an important distinction to make, since the model may seem to suggest that the historical and social realities of early Roman Palestine can easily be divided and sub-divided into the white and grey blocks, and key ideologies. This is of course far too a simplistic reading of the often confusing and overlapping social and historical realities of early Roman Palestine. Rather the model provides a hypothetical framework that depicts contrasting ideologies between the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine, as well as how Roman imperialism inserted itself in the contrasting ideologies. It is argued that Roman imperial policies exacerbated these contrasts, as well as the social divide between the elite and non-elite.

In totality, the contrasting ideologies led to contrasting visions for the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine. In the horizontal component of the model, the key ideologies are contrasted between the elite and non-elite within a social domain. Here, the model attempts to indicate ideological differences that contributed to the conflict between the two groups. In the vertical component of the model, a hierarchy of social domains indicate the hypothetical priority of social values for the elite and non-elite for the type of society they envisioned (by means of arrows). This means that the model attempts to describe the way social domains, and the inherent ideologies for the elite and non-elite, combined to form a particular vision for that social group. This hierarchy of social domains (and ideologies for each domain) provide key points for a particular vision for the elite and the non-elite. The horizontal and vertical components of the model is discussed in more detail in § 3.4.1.

### 3.4.1 ROMAN IMPERIALISM AND SOCIAL DOMAINS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The model has four levels. Each level represents a societal domain<sup>28</sup> (politics, culture,<sup>29</sup> economics and religion). Each of these social domains will be defined and discussed in more detail in the following chapters (Chapter 4–7). The domains are given in order of importance to that particular social group: from top to bottom for the elite, and from bottom to top for the non-elite (which is indicated by the arrows on the side). According to this model, the elite held the ideological importance of particular societal domains in the following order: Politics, then culture, then economics, then religion.<sup>30</sup> For the non-elite the order of importance was: Religion, then economics, then culture, then politics.

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<sup>28</sup> The definition of Hanson and Oakman for social domain is used consistently in this dissertation: “An institutional system or constellation of social institutions. Every society manifests the domains of politics, kinship, economics and religion, but in different configurations and relationships” (2008: Glossary 3 [Kindle edition]). The study of social domains belongs to a much later time period with the development of sociology. Therefore, the use of social domains may open the model to criticism. Is the use of social domains misleading? But, just because the field of sociology developed much later, does not mean that there were no social dynamics and systems at play in early Roman Palestine. It is hard to argue that there was no such thing as politics, culture, economics, and religion in early Roman Palestine. Bodies of work dedicated to exploring the social domains of early Roman Palestine include Hanson & Oakman (2008); Malina (1996); Oakman (2008).

Rather, the nature of social domains was different in early Roman Palestine, and in line with the broader Mediterranean world. Firstly, the social domains were embedded (or overlapping). Secondly, there was a different hierarchy of social domains compared to modern societies, because there were different social value configurations. For example, kinship enjoyed primacy in early Roman Palestine; economics enjoy primacy in modern individualistic societies (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]; Malina 2001: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]). Both these factors are taken in account throughout the dissertation.

<sup>29</sup> “Culture” can be a problematic descriptor for this particular social domain. Although the word “culture” fits in with the pattern of how the various broader social domains are described in the model (namely politics, economics and religion), the problem is that “culture” can be notoriously difficult to define and to narrow down in scope. Refer to § 5.1 for a thorough discussion.

<sup>30</sup> Again, this does not mean that the embedded nature of social domains in early Roman Palestine is denied or overlooked. Rather, it is acknowledged that the model itself is a simplified representation of social reality in early Roman Palestine — not social reality itself. The model separates social domains for heuristic purposes only. By placing social domains into its own category, the model allows for comparing the key ideologies of the elite and the non-elite in that particular domain. The model attempts to include an aspect of the

This is an important feature of the model. It allows for an embedded view of social domains in early Roman Palestine without losing the distinctive focus of contrasting ideologies between the elite and non-elite. For example: when the economic views of the elite are examined (which is indicated as “extractive” in the model), this ideology is subservient to the higher social domain on the model (“reciprocity” in the political domain). This means that the extractive economic policies of the elite were informed by the patronage ideals of the Roman empire, where the resources of the Roman imperium served the political interest of the emperor. This suggests that the Judean elite were willing participants in enriching themselves through extraction of resources since this was the Roman law of the land. But it easily could also suggest that the Judean elite had virtually no choice in implemented economic extraction through various taxation policies since the Roman patronage demanded it, and their social position was established by patronage itself. Either way, the political value of reciprocity overshadowed and informed economic ideologies in early Roman Palestine.

As a counter example, the non-elite held to a distributive economic view which was subservient to their religious view on covenant (which was the more important ideology for their social group). This means that their vision of an alternate society — marked by economic distribution — was not based on an alternate political ideal of justice predominantly (as perhaps more modern peasantry societies), but it was based predominantly on a theological understanding of the covenantal ideal of justice. Since God is just, and Israel was in covenant<sup>31</sup> with this just God; resources had to be used justly so each could find refuge “under their own fig tree and vine” (Mic 4:4).

The grey block on each level depicts the influence of Roman imperial policies on that social domain in early Roman Palestine. These policies widened the schism between the non-elite (whose ideologies are described on the left) and the elite (whose

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embedded nature of social domains by indicating a hierarchy of social domains. With this hierarchy, the influence of one social domain on the other domains is indicated.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion on the use of covenant in the dissertation refer to § 7.2.

ideologies are described on the right). The grey blocks are placed between the white blocks to illustrate their divisive effect. The grey blocks are also indented to illustrate that these policies contributed to instability in early Roman Palestine. It became a house of cards. The non-elite are placed on the left (the white blocks under the grey blocks) to illustrate the injustice that they were subjected to in early Roman Palestine. The elite are represented by the white blocks placed on the right and on top of the grey blocks, which illustrates that they were beneficiaries of Roman patronage.

The white blocks on each level (namely politics, culture, economics and religion) are used to describe and contrast the ideologies of the elite and non-elite. The white blocks are of varying sizes to emphasise the importance of that ideology to the elite and the non-elite. The arrows on the side indicate the order of importance of the societal domains for the elite and non-elite. Following that line of reasoning the order of key ideologies for the elite was (from top to bottom): 1. The political power and position of the Judean elite was derived from Roman and Herodian patronage. 2. The traditional sacerdotal positions of the Judean elite in the Temple provided legitimacy for their policies in the eye of the non-elite. It was a cultural and religious legitimisation of their power. 3. This allowed for economic extraction of wealth from the non-elite. 4. However, it meant that their traditional roles of custodians of the Temple became static. Their religious ideologies concerning the Temple played a lesser social role compared to Roman patronage and economic extraction.

On the side of the non-elite (from bottom to top): 1. Covenantal theology formed the basis of an alternative vision of society 2. Economic distribution of wealth was a given ideal. The land was covenantal. It belonged to God, and it ought to be used justly. 3. Older Israelite cultural traditions of the Patriarchs, the Exodus and the Messianic Kings served as a source of cultural inspiration 4. Populist leaders such as prophets, bandit leaders and messiahs were to enact and propagate covenantal solidarity. However, this older populist memory of solidarity was overshadowed by the political force of Roman patronage (which are the opposing values on the top level).

In this dissertation, the hierarchical line of the Judean elite will be followed in terms of the layout of the chapters. In other words, the order of the chapters (Chapter 4–7) will first focus on politics, then culture, then economics, then religion. This is done since the exegetical focus will be on the Lukan prophetic discourse of Jesus in Jerusalem. Much of the discourse is focused as a critique of the Judean elite, and therefore it ostensibly speaks to the elite hierarchy of ideologies. The first part of each chapter will contain a critical discussion of the contrasting ideologies of the elite and the non-elite for that particular social domain. Supportive arguments and examples will be provided for the allocation of elite/non-elite ideologies in each social domain.

### 3.4.2 CONTRASTING IDEOLOGIES IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The various sizes of the white blocks (representing key ideologies) on each level (representing societal domains) not only indicate the level of importance of that ideology for the elite/non-elite for that particular societal domain, but also the influence of that ideology on that particular society. For example: on the level of politics the non-elite has a very small white block (whereas the elite has its biggest white block). This indicates the relative powerlessness of the non-elite in the face of the political realities of Roman and Herodian patronage. The large block for the elite on this level indicates that most of their power was derived from patronage and that this reality of Roman patronage was a large formative factor in early Roman Palestine. Conversely, popular non-elite religious movements — such as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth and John the Baptist — relied on a robust covenantal theology (as illustrated by the large white block on the side of the non-elite religious ideology). These movements had a real impact on the socio-political environment of early Roman Palestine, whereas the theological impact of the Judean elite seems somewhat muted in existing textual data (§ 7.4). This is illustrated by the small white block on the level of religion on the side of the elite.

In terms of the culture of early Roman Palestine, the elite relied on a sense of cultural history to legitimise their power. More specifically, the Jerusalem Temple served as the cultural centre of early Judaism (§ 5.1). The cultural and religious control of the Temple provided a platform for their policies. Their real source of

power was Roman patronage relationships, but by controlling the Temple their power and policies appeared legitimate to the local population. There are many examples of this: Herod became a patron of the Temple by renovating the Temple Mount, the Sadducees and other royal priest families competed for the control of the office of the high priest, and the Romans placed troops at the Temple to control both the crowds and the priests. Although the Temple kept its status as the pre-eminent Jewish symbol of the day, the non-elite were gradually alienated from the Temple. Populist champions spoke out against such abuse of the social power of the Temple; Jesus of Nazareth symbolically destroys the Temple by driving out the vendors (Lk 19:45). John the Baptist warns the Sadducees and Pharisees that the axe is laying at the root (Mt 3:7–10). Perhaps the most haunting incident is the peasant prophet Jesus son of Ananus, who daily prophesied against Jerusalem and the Temple for seven years, despite beatings by the elite, until he was finally killed by a Roman projectile — still declaring woe to Jerusalem: “Woe, woe to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house” (*J.W.* 6.5). Instead the non-elite relied more and more on the older Torah traditions (such as the Exodus and the Conquest) as a source of inspiration of what it meant to be Jewish (§ 5.3).

In terms of the economics of early Roman Palestine, the elite extracted wealth in accordance to Roman ideology of taxation and tribute, and the non-elite hoped for wealth distribution in accordance to covenantal justice.

In terms of religious thought of early Roman Palestine, the theological views of the elite were increasingly becoming irrelevant — hence the small white block on the side of the elite in the model (§ 7.4). This does not mean that the elite had no theological views during this period. But when the scribal and Gospel texts are considered, the view towards the elite is often antagonistic and somewhat polemic in nature. The views of the priestly elite are stated (as per Luke 19:11–23), but it is stated in opposition to the non-elite. The elite has virtually no voice in the text to state their own case. The exception is the work of Josephus (who was part of the elite himself). But the work of Josephus strengthens the point made that the theological views of the elite seems somewhat muted. The work of Josephus takes on a more political and apologetic function, than a theological one (§ 1.9). To be fair, that is what his circumstances demanded of such a body of work. Nevertheless, it

illustrates the awkward positioning of the Judean elite between the theology of their traditional sacerdotal roles, and the politics of their client role toward Roman patrons.

This may suggest that the sacerdotal theology, which justified the power of the high priestly families, were becoming stale and out of touch with the realities of early Roman Palestine society. It struggled to provide a continued explanation of the suffering of the people, nor could it console and inspire people any more. This might have been due to the abuse of the sacerdotal system by elite priests, and not because people rejected the sacerdotal concept as such. A good example of this is the struggle between the populist Jesus movement and the elite priests in the Gospels.

Instead, the covenantal language of the older Israelite tradition inspired various scribal answers to the theological questions of the period. Covenantal theology inspired personal piety and eschatological expectations (§ 7.3). However, covenantal theology did not have the same unifying effect as in the case of earlier Israelite tradition. A notable example of this is the social reforms of Nehemiah which had strong covenantal undertones (Neh 5:1–13). In reality, the true source of power during early Roman Palestine was Roman patronage, and this seemingly forced covenantal solidarity further away from the public sphere towards a household and community setting. However, the longing for covenantal religious solidarity was still powerful enough to inspire religious groups to action (such as the Essenes' eschatological expectations). It mobilised political groups (such as the Fourth Philosophy), and influenced the religious practices of the whole nation (with theological streams such as household Judaism). Even so, it was not powerful enough to produce credible elite leaders or unify society as it did in the past.

Arguments, and examples, for the allocation of these ideologies to the elite and non-elite will be provided in the following chapters (Chapter 4–7). The first part in these chapters will be devoted to a description of the particular social domain in early Roman Palestine, as well as to the elite and non-elite view of that particular social domain. The model will be applied to heuristically identify a pericope of Lukan prophetic discourse in Jerusalem that is applicable to that social domain. The second

part of each chapter will exegete the selected pericope by means of socio-rhetoric criticism.

### 3.4.3 WEAKNESSES OF THE MODEL

Three possible weaknesses of the model are apparent from a socio-scientific point of view. In the first place the model is hypothetical, and a simplified representation of social reality. Although the model is based on existing social models, textual and archaeological data, the actual social and historical reality was probably more complex and overlapping. This may lead to a false representation of textual data, since the model forces the data into a certain interpretative framework. But to be fair, this is to some extent the case with all interpretive models and social models.

In the second place, it does not include kinship as a social domain in early Roman Palestine. This is a weakness because kinship was probably the most important social domain in early Roman Palestine (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]). However, the aim of the model is to contrast key ideologies between the elite and the non-elite (on a horizontal level), and give an indication of the type of society envisioned by elite/non-elite (on the vertical level). This layout of horizontal and vertical levels in the model is problematic with regards to kinship in early Roman Palestine. This is due to the universal importance of kinship in early Roman Palestine. In other words, the ideologies concerning actual kinship may have been alike among the elite and non-elite, and therefore not a driver of social conflict — and the aims of the model is precisely to examine social conflict itself — not to present a general description of the social world of early Roman Palestine. But, there may have been differences between the elite and non-elite when fictive kinship<sup>32</sup> is

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<sup>32</sup> “Actual” kinship refers to biological kin, whereas “fictive” kinship refers to the application of kinship to non-biological (or familial) relationships such as patron-client relationships. By adding a kinship component to a non-biological relationship, an emphasis is placed on the primacy of the relationship. This is especially true in societies with a strong group (or collectivistic) identity. The naming convention of “fictive kinship” follows from Elliott (1991), Hanson and Oakman (1996) and Malina (2001). The naming convention of “actual kinship” follows from Malina (2001). However, it is unfortunate that “fictive” is semantically often associated with “fictional” or “untrue”. It is not the intent in the dissertation to depict fictive kinship as fictional relationships, it merely is a way of denoting where kinship is added to non-biological relationships to indicate the primacy of those relationships.

considered. Elite fictive kinship would have revolved around the “household of Caesar” with patronage as a driving force. Non-elite fictive kinship could have revolved around covenantal ideals. An example of this is when Jesus redefines family in the light of the imminence of the Kingdom:

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you”. But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother”.

(Mt 12:46–50, NRSV)

However, the obvious point here is that the concept of kinship was used to underline the importance of political (in the shape of patronage ideals) and religious ideologies (in the shape of covenantal ideals) — hence it was fictive kinship and not actual kinship. Kinship was used to add socio-cultural weight to other social domains such as political and religious ideals. In that sense, actual kinship does not fit the layout of the model where contrasting elite and non-elite ideologies aid in understanding of social conflict in early Roman Palestine, nor does fictive kinship add a significant layer of depth to the model which already describes the conflicting ideologies in the other social domains, e.g. the political domain (reciprocity versus solidarity) or religious domain (sacerdotal versus covenantal). This does not mean that the domain of kinship was not important or does not feature in the Lukan prophetic discourse (see § 8.3)! It only means that for the aims of the model (to describe contrasting ideologies of the Judean elite and non-elite, and to describe the influence of Roman imperialism on said domains), kinship would unnecessarily complicate the model itself, and would not fit the layout of the model.

Another weakness of the model is the lack of description of the embedded nature of the social domains and how their integrated ideologies impacted each social domain. In reality the approach of the elite could be rather described as politicised religion. In other words, the political value of patronage influenced their religious actions around

the Temple, but it is exactly their religious status as elite priests that gave them the platform of leadership over the non-elite (as well as a platform to qualify for Roman patronage). Conversely the approach of the non-elite could be described as religious kinship. A covenantal understanding promoted a sense of solidarity with people that does not fall within their actual (real) kin. Rather, the religious concept of covenant promoted the obligation of treating other people as kin because of covenantal solidarity. A great example of this is the subversive discourse in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37). Here the boundaries of kinship are extended beyond the cultural norm through the covenantal obedience (and disobedience) of the characters. Another example is the sayings of Jesus that his kin is the people who obeys the covenantal instructions of God: “But he said to them, ‘My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it’” (Lk 8:21, NRSV).

However, a model is not able to capture or reflect all the details and nuances of social reality. It is important to keep the aims of the model in mind to sufficiently simplify the model (without losing an accurate depiction of the social reality of the society studied). In this sense the goal of the model was to illustrate the contrast between the elite and non-elite in key ideologies in order to further study the escalation of social conflict between the elite and non-elite. It is not the goal of the model to illustrate the embedded nature of the social domains in early Roman Palestine. Nevertheless, a serious effort is made to keep the embedded nature of social domains in mind by indicating the order of importance of the key ideologies for the elite and non-elite. By indicating the order of importance of the ideologies for the elite and non-elite a hypothetical explanation is given by the model of the influence that key ideologies had on each other.

### **3.5 LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSES WITH JERUSALEM AS LOCATION**

As discussed in Chapter 1 (§ 1.4.1), the scope of the dissertation is limited in several ways: exegesis of key pericopes will be limited to the Lukan prophetic discourse with Jerusalem as location. This is to say that key focal pericopes should be discourses — which is defined as those passages that orders the concerns of the Jesus movement through language (Malina 2001: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]). Furthermore, these discourses should be prophetic in nature. As defined in Chapter 1 (§ 1.4.1.4),

the focus on “prophetic” for the purposes of this dissertation is in the line of social prophets in early Roman Palestine.

That implies that such discourse should contain one or more of the following focal areas: the selected discourse should be an appeal to the basic need of the peasantry for liberation from socio-political injustice; or serve as a rallying call to mobilise popular movements to seek societal change; or state an ideology and agenda for societal reform in order to bring about an alternative society which would bring about justice for the peasantry; or refer back to earlier Israelite tradition such as the Exodus, Conquest and Prophets in the context of providing an alternative and just society. Lastly, selected Lukan prophetic discourses should have Jerusalem as narrative location, which allows for pericopes from Luke 19:11–24:53.

When the model of influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013), as well as the criteria of examining prophetic discourse, is applied to the scope of the dissertation, the following pericopes will be of chief exegetical importance.

- As critique of elite Judean politics: The parable of the Throne Claimant (Lk 19:11–27)
- As critique of elite Judean culture: The Destruction of the Temple (Lk 21:1–37)
- As critique of elite Judean economics: The Question of paying Tribute (Lk 20:19–25)
- As critique of elite Judean religion: The Authority of Jesus challenged (Lk 20:1–19)

All these passages convey the escalating conflict between the Judean elite in Jerusalem, and can be construed as Luke’s critique of the ideology of the Jerusalem elite. Therefore, the pericopes are examined in a particular sequence. This sequence reflects the social hierarchy of ideologies according to elite interest (via the model of influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine [Jacobs 2013]). This sequence determines the order of the chapters (Chapter 4–7). The

question then arises how Luke portrays the alternative ideology and practices that the Jesus movement proposes in the face of the social realities of early Roman Palestine. Here the passage of the Last Supper becomes instructive as a new prophetic orthology<sup>33</sup> among the Jesus movement (Lk 22:7–38).

In other words, the narrative structure of Luke allows for an interplay between their heterology against the Judean elite in Luke 19:11–21:37, and a proposed new orthology of the Jesus movement in Luke 22:7–38. Luke 19:11–21:37 criticises the dominant ideology of the Judean elite, and an alternative ideology is presented in the Last Supper (Lk 22:7–38). This exegetical outline will be incorporated in the dissertation by examining in Chapter 4–7 the passages of critique (heterology) as presented by Luke. In these chapters the particular social domain of the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) will be presented in more detail, the fit of the model and the particular pericope will be explored, and socio-rhetorical exegesis of the particular pericope will be done. In Chapter 8 the vision of the alternative society, by means of the new Lukan orthology of the Last Supper (Lk 22:7–38) will be exegeted by means of the socio-rhetorical method.

Lastly, the passages of Acts 1–7 will be compared to the key findings of Chapter 4–8. As explained in Chapter 1 (§1.4.1.5), the purpose of this is to compare the orthopraxis of the early Jerusalem church (as described by Luke) to the Lukan prophetic discourse. The key findings of the exegesis in Chapters 4–8 will therefore be compared to the social patterns practised by the early Jerusalem church in Acts 1–7. It should be noted that the aim of Chapter 9 is not to draw a correlation between Lukan prophetic discourse in Jerusalem and the praxis of the early church; to

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<sup>33</sup> The definition of discourse (as well as the social function of discourse) of Malina is followed in this dissertation (§ 1.4.1.3) Orthology is the discourse that stems from the dominant ideologies of a society or social group. The purpose of orthology is to re-affirm the prevailing ideology, and encourage social patterns of behaviour that reinforces the dominant ideology (this is called orthopraxis). However, as predicted by the social conflict theory, other ideologies compete for dominance within society or a social group. This alternative ideology leads to a discourse that can be termed “heterology”. Heterology aims to unsettle and disturb the dominant ideology. “Heterology is dissidence; heterology is subversiveness” (Malina 2001: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]).

conflate text and reality. Rather the praxis of the early Jerusalem church, as presented in Acts, is applied as a test to the key findings of Chapters 4–8. This will either strengthen the key findings, or weaken it. Finally, Chapter 9 will give a summary and proposed conclusion in answer to the research question.

The layout of the following chapters will therefore be as follows: Chapter 4 will contain a discussion of Lukan prophetic discourse and politics in early Roman Palestine, with a focus on the parable of the Throne Claimant in Luke 19:11–27. Chapter 5 will contain a discussion of Lukan prophetic discourse and culture in early Roman Palestine, with a focus on the discourse on the Destruction of the Temple in Luke 21:1–37. Chapter 6 will contain a discussion of Lukan prophetic discourse and economics in early Roman Palestine, with a focus on the discourse on the Question of paying Tribute in Luke 20:19–25. Chapter 7 will contain a discussion of Lukan prophetic discourse and religion in early Roman Palestine, with a focus on the discourse of the Authority of Jesus challenged (Lk 20:1–19). All these chapters will mostly be examining the Lukan critique (heteroloquy) on the Jerusalem elite. Chapter 8 will then examine the proposed solutions (new ortholoquy) given by the Luke in the discourse of the Last Supper (Lk 22:7–38). Chapter 9 will examine the orthopraxis of the early Jerusalem church in Acts 1–7. Comparisons will be made with the key findings of Chapters 4–8. Should the discourse (of Luke) and praxis (of Acts) compare well, it strengthens the arguments of the dissertation. Lastly, Chapter 9 will offer a summary and conclusion to the findings of the dissertation.

## CHAPTER 4: LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSE AND POLITICS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you”. He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem’”.

(Lk 13:31–33, NRSV)

There were two men of learning in the city [Jerusalem] who were thought the most skilful in the laws of their country, and were on that account held in very great esteem all over the nation...There was a great concourse of young men to these when they expounded the laws, and there got together every day a kind of an army of such that were growing up to be men. Now these men were informed that the king was wearing away with melancholy, and with a sickness, they dropped words to their acquaintances, how it was a very proper time to defend the cause of God, and to pull down what has been erected against the law of their country... Now the king had put up a golden eagle over the great gate of the temple, which these learned men exhorted them to cut down...

(Josephus, *J.W.* 1.33)

### 4.1 THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

#### 4.1.1 THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE HERODIAN CLIENT RULERS

The quoted textual sources reflect the unpopularity of the Herodian client rule. Josephus (*J.W.* 1.33) recounts a narrative where reports of an illness of Herod the Great, spurred on a subversive act of removing an image of a golden eagle. This eagle was placed by Herod over the entrance of the Temple from the Upper City. Herod was not as ill as the instigators hoped, and he had the perpetrators summarily executed. Why was the image of the eagle such an important symbol that it spurred

on protest action? Josephus indicates that it was deemed as contrary to the “law of their country”. What was this “law of their country” that the symbols broke? Was the eagle viewed as a transgression of the Jewish religious command against the display of images (*Ant.* 17.6)? Was the eagle viewed as a symbol of Roman dominance over and above the idealised Judean theocracy (as symbolised by the Temple)? Or was the eagle an indication of the patron-client relationship between the Judean elite and the Romans? After all, it was placed over the entrance of the Temple used by the elite coming from the Upper City. Due to the embedded nature of politics and religion, all these possible reasons may be relevant. But what is clear from the incident is that Herod the Great had a near absolute control of local Judean politics. Only upon his perceived death-bed did the perpetrators dare to act. Equally, the rule and immense achievements of Herod were not celebrated by the local Judean population, but was met with a desire to desecrate his legacy — as the removal of the eagle suggests. Not for nothing did the capital of Galilee, Sepphoris, rise in the revolt after the death of Herod. This revolt was cruelly suppressed by the Syrian legate, Varus (*Ant.* 17.10).

Similar tensions about an unpopular Herodian ruler is present also in the Gospels. In Luke 13:31–33 Jesus is warned of the impending action of Herod Antipas against him. The narrative irony is that the main antagonists of Jesus warn him of this danger. It appears to be a case of the enemy of my enemy is my friend. According to Luke, Jesus gives a dismissive reply and refers to Herod as “that fox”. Foxes were perceived to be insignificant entities in Old Testament thought.<sup>34</sup> Rather, the rule of the Kingdom of God is stated as superior to the rule of the Herodians. Here Luke refers to the exorcisms and healings that Jesus performed as proof of the power of the Kingdom of God over and above Herod. But a rather sober admission is also given to the political realities of early Roman Palestine — Jesus is inexorably on his way to Jerusalem for a showdown with the Judean and Roman political leaders; a prophet cannot be killed outside the Judean capital.

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<sup>34</sup> “That stone wall they are building — any fox going up on it would break it down!” (Neh 4:3, NRSV). “Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards — for our vineyards are in blossom” (Song 2:15, NRSV). Malina & Neyrey (1996:125) notes that the use of animal types — including this example of Luke — implies a stereotype that the audience immediately recognise without further explanation. The audience would “know” what foxes are like, and what qualities they would exhibit.

These textual sources depict the unpopularity of Herodian politics. They also hint at the larger political realities and influence of the *Pax Romana* — and how it overshadowed the possibility of political reform in the local Judean context. Social change was unlikely due to the way Roman imperialism shaped and maintained the political landscape of early Roman Palestine. This hold was so strong that even after the death of Herod the Great, palpable political change did not come.

#### 4.1.2 THE NATURE OF THE PAX ROMANA AND JUDEAN POLITICAL IDEALS

Politics play an important role as a social domain to determine social cohesion or social conflict. Politics, by its very nature, are the broad description of the collective action of a nation (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Glossary [Kindle edition]). Politics describe how various social groups set collective goals for a nation. These collective goals are managed by the organs of the state, and serve as an expression for the collective will of a nation. Inevitably, the exercise of power is intimately involved with politics. The central questions in politics are: who has power within the state, how is that power utilised, and to what end is that power exercised? Equally important, for the purposes of this dissertation, is the question of how is the exercise of that power critiqued. This becomes a question of justice: the use of power is a moral issue because it profoundly impacts the lives of people and social groups. However, the problem with allocating morality to the exercise of justice and power, is that it requires a philosophical foundation to that measurement (cf. §7.5). In other words, if politics and power are intertwined, and if power needs to be critiqued on the basis of justice, then how is that particular philosophy of justice defined — and does the foundation to that principle of justice hold under closer scrutiny? This may be seen as a central issue for the social domain of politics in early Roman Palestine.

In order to continue this line thought, some background is needed regarding the socio-historical location of early Roman Palestine. The description of this social world serves as an important precursor to describing the political arena of early Roman Palestine. Since political systems vary greatly in different time periods and cultures, and are heavily influenced by other domains such as economics and religion, it should not be readily assumed that the socio-historical location of early

Roman Palestine is evident. The social world of early Roman Palestine fitted into a general type of socio-political system. Borg (2006:79–85)<sup>35</sup> connects the social world of early Roman Palestine with a “preindustrial agricultural domination system”. As a “preindustrial and agricultural society”, early Roman Palestine was able to develop large scale agriculture and the accumulation of population in larger cities. This accumulation of a population was facilitated by the creation of a larger supply of surplus goods. As a “domination” system early Roman Palestine housed a wealthy and powerful elite class. This elite class developed as the population aggregated in the cities, and the need arose for governance for the burgeoning number of people. Typically, in such a social system, the elite consisted of about 1% of the population. They have a high concentration of resources at their disposal. Their various stewards, managers and servants (which is often dubbed as “the retainers”) enlarge this class to roughly 10% of the population. The other 90% of the population were mostly peasants, who struggled with subsistence farming on small parcels of land. It should be noted that in an agricultural society, access to the economy was based on productive access to land. Therefore, the economic outlook for the peasant family who lost their land was dire.

According to Borg (2006:79–85), a political domination system found in pre-modern agricultural societies typically exhibited the following characteristics: they were politically oppressive (since political power was kept among 1% of the population), and the peasantry was unable to attain the necessary power to enact their collective concerns on a larger political scale. A domination system was economically exploitative since the elite acquired from 50% to 66% of produce and trade, with little or no mechanisms for a trickle-down economy to help the peasantry. There was no, or little, mechanisms of distribution of resources.<sup>36</sup> The exception was client/patron relationships (§ 4.1.3). Resources were bestowed by elite patrons based on face-to-face relationships with their dependents (clients). This was an inefficient mechanism

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<sup>35</sup> Borg is certainly not alone in this description of the broad social system of early Roman Palestine. Some of the concurring authors include: Houtart 1976:16–17; Fiensy 1991:2,156–159; Rohrbaugh 1993:35; Saldarini 1989:36; Borg 2006: Chapter 9 (Kindle edition); Oakman 2008:251; Horsley 2012: Chapter 7 (Kindle edition).

<sup>36</sup> The economic systems of early Roman Palestine are explored in § 6.1 and § 6.2.

of distribution of resources on a larger scale, and rather served as a method of consolidating power in the hands of elite. After all, this form of reciprocity “is thought to create and sustain enduring relationships of dependency, whether between individuals or between groups” (Schwartz 2010: Chapter 1 [Kindle version]). A domination system was also religiously legitimated, which is to say the elite was seen to rule by divine right (or at least that their actions were endorsed by the divine).<sup>37</sup> Lastly, such system was kept in place by armed conflict or violence. Wars were fought to gain land and wealth. This enabled the direct acquisition of land or indirect acquisition by means of tribute (Borg 2006:79–85).

This domination system was embodied in the time of Jesus in the form of the *Pax Romana*. The *Pax Romana* superficially means the “Peace of Rome” (or cessation from war or discord). Ironically, the territories that Roman peace consolidated, were gained by waging war (Wood 2016:96). But on a deeper level it contained a particular political method, and a particular view on justice. For Crossan & Reed (2004:382) the *Pax Romana* espoused a philosophy of retributive justice. This meant that, from a Roman perspective, power was used in such way to protect Roman interest, and maintain a hierarchical social system (with the Roman elite at the top). This was justified on the back of Roman military prowess. This political philosophy was shaped after many years of civil war within the burgeoning Roman empire, and signalled a serious attempt to avoid such wars in future. The *Pax Romana* came to the fore after the ascension to power of Augustus in 27 BCE. It consolidated Roman vassals and territories into an empire with Rome as the capital. The *Pax Romana* was therefore also a legal mechanism, undergirded by Roman military power, in order to exercise Roman imperial designs (Wengst 1986:10).

The *Pax Romana* held distinct benefits for those under its sway. After the years of devastating Roman civil war (which caused destruction in various territories in the Mediterranean), the need arose for stability and peace in the region. The *Pax* provided that and more. It ensured an infrastructure of a high quality. Extensive networks of Roman roads improved trade and communication. The Roman legal

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<sup>37</sup> The cultural and religious legitimation of elite politics in early Roman Palestine is explored in § 5.2.

system gave a cogent and stable system of settling disputes and maintaining order. Roman legionaries destroyed piracy and banditry on trading routes, and more importantly, protected territories from attacks from rival empires such the Parthians. All in all, the *Pax Romana* would reign supreme for at least two centuries and provided a high level of wealth creation in the empire (Perry *et al* 1996:144–150).

The *Pax Romana* presented some problems though — and especially so in early Roman Palestine. In reality the *Pax Romana* (and the imperial ambitions it undergirded) resulted in an increasing spiral of violence in Judea and Galilee (Horsley 1987:26–27). Illustrations of this spiral of violence can be found<sup>38</sup> among the Judean prefects (6–41 CE). Pontius Pilate came to be known as the worst perpetrator of political violence during his time of service in 26–36 CE. Pilate was involved with three separate incidents of escalating social unrest with political blunders (Newsome 1992:294–296). Cumanus (48–52 CE) slaughtered a crowd when they protested the rude gestures of a Roman soldier during Passover, and was accused of receiving bribes by the Samaritans in order to ignore the robbing of Jewish pilgrims. Felix (52–60 CE) tried to solve the growing crisis of banditry in the countryside in a cruel manner. He was also involved in the political murder of the high priest Jonathan (*Ant.* 20.8). Felix led a military action against the popular prophet dubbed as the “Egyptian”. 400 people were killed and 200 captured. Felix is also the procurator who took the apostle Paul captive (Newsome 1992:302). Even Felix’s own compatriots left a disparaging depiction of him. Tacitus described him as a person with “the power of a king in the spirit of a slave” (*Hist.* 5.9). Under Festus (60–62 CE), the spiral of violence became unmanageable, as the rural areas fell under the sway of the bandits and social unrest increased in the urban areas. He tried to contain the situation with military actions against the bandits. The last procurators Albinus (62–64 CE), and Florus (64–66 CE), were not able to contain the situation and made it worse by taking bribes. Florus became little more than a

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<sup>38</sup> Most of these depictions is from the narrative accounts of Josephus. The argument here is not that his account of early Roman Palestine is historically verifiable, merely that textual sources from that time period depict an escalation of political violence. The lack of textual sources makes multiple attestation of Josephus’ account complicated (§ 1.9). But the point is, in the perspective of an author such as Josephus, political violence escalated in an alarming fashion.

brigand, and apparently pillaged towns at the slightest provocation (Newsome 1992:299–302).

According to the social theories of Camara (1971:30–31), such a “spiral of violence” typically develops as political action and reaction of oppressor and oppressed evolves. This spiral typically follows four stages: in the first stage, injustice inflicts harm on the subjugated social group. Injustice is defined here as a form of institutional violence, enforced by unjust laws. During the second phase the subjugated group reacts by means of protest and resistance, which is often expressed in the form of mass demonstration. The third stage is the repression of protest and resistance by the powerful. Such repression may be achieved by means of psychological means (such as intimidation), or physical means (such as the use of military force). As a result of repression, the resistance is driven underground as a means of survival. This leads to the fourth phase, namely revolt.

All four of these phases can be recognised in the examples given above: the laws generated by the *Pax Romana* created an environment where various Judean groups expressed protest (for example movements shaped by popular prophets such as the “Egyptian”, or the cutting down of the golden eagle over the entrance of the Temple). This protest was met with repression in the form of violence (military action against the followers of the Egyptian, and the execution of those who removed the eagle). The Roman elite understood the possible threat of these popular movements, and took swift action to try and prevent growth thereof among the general population. After all, the threat of Herod Antipas against the life of Jesus (Lk 13:31–33), can be interpreted as the political action of the oppressor to prevent the growth of the Jesus movement. Therefore, in order to understand the unfolding spiral of violence in early Roman Palestine, a closer look is needed into how the *Pax Romana* shaped the elite Judean political ideology and aspirations, as well as the alternate political ideals of the Judean peasantry.

#### 4.1.3 ELITE JUDEAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The Romans generally followed the same pattern of rule in their various territories, and this pattern comprised of three steps. First, military conquest of the territory was

completed; then the extraction of tribute was set up as a means of funnelling resources towards Rome; and lastly local elite client rulers were appointed (Horsley 2010b:108-110). The appointment of local client rulers followed the Mediterranean social custom of patronage. Patronage can be described as a model or construct that social scientists use to examine different power relationships. The basic definition of patronage by Moxnes (1991:242) is followed in this dissertation:

Patron-client relations are social relationships between individuals based on a strong element of inequality and difference in power. The basic structure of the relationship is an exchange of different and very unequal resources. A patron has social, economic and political resources that are needed by a client. In return, a client can give expressions of loyalty and honor that are useful for the patron.

For Chow (1991:26-28), patronage exhibited the following features: patron-client relations were exchange relations. This is to say that the patron gave to the client what he needed, and the client reciprocated by giving to the patron what he wanted. Patron-client relationships were asymmetric. This is to say that the two parties were not equal in power. The patron was more powerful. Such a relationship was particularistic. This means that resources were given to particular individuals and groups, not given universally. This made patronage very personal in nature. The patron-client was also supra-legal, binding and voluntary. This means that patronage often superseded official laws and customs, and was based on a mutual understanding. These relationships were long term, and entered into voluntarily. Lastly, such a relationship was vertical: it bound the client and patron together, often to the exclusion of other patron-client networks. All of these features meant that patronage often served to concentrate power in the hands of the very few, since it built highly personal networks around the powerful.

For Malina (2001: Chapter 1 [Kindle version]) three factors had to be in place for patronage to be effective. In the first place, the social value of reciprocity<sup>39</sup> had to be

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<sup>39</sup> Reciprocity is an expression of the principle of “one good turn deserves another”. Reciprocity therefore added a moral and social tone to exchange. What is given, should be

embraced by both parties. This bound the patron and client together, since a client was socially obliged to respond to the benefaction of the patron. Patrons sought clients since it enhanced their honour and prestige, and created dependents who have to respond with loyalty. But this sort of relationship only worked well where reciprocity underpinned patronage. Patronage became a strong social custom in the Roman empire because it was undergirded by social value of reciprocity (Schwartz 2010: Chapter 1 [Kindle version]). In the second place, there had to be unequal status between the patron and the client. This means that reciprocity becomes espoused by patronage in societies where there are high power discrepancies between various social groups and individuals. This means that early Roman Palestine was an excellent environment for patronage. Finally, there had to be proximity between the patron and the client. If only a few in society held a high measure of power, then power became inaccessible for the many unless it was accessed by personal contact with the powerful. This meant that patronage operated with a face-to-face means. Access to power became highly personal between individuals. Power was not transferred by means of impersonal institutions, as per universalist societies,<sup>40</sup> but was derived from personal relationships.

Patronage then, is a form of negative reciprocity where there is a strong power discrepancy between the patron (who has power and resources) and the client (who lacks power and resources). The patron gives palpable resources and goods to the client, who then reciprocates with less palpable goods such as honour and loyalty. In effect this social custom led to the lasting concentration of power among the elite, and none more so than the Roman elite. This custom of patronage meant that the Roman *Pax* depended on a “face-to-face” method of rule. Local client kings and

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responded to in an appropriate manner. Reciprocity built strong and enduring relationships of dependency between individuals and even social groups (Schwartz 2010: Chapter 1 [Kindle version]).

<sup>40</sup> An important distinction needs to be made between “universalist societies” and societies where patron-client relations determined who held power. In the case of the former, power is allocated according to office; power given due to personal relationship is frowned upon as nepotism (or even as a form of corruption). In the latter, power is primarily bestowed because of a mutually beneficial personal relationship and seen as a natural outflow of how things are done (Moxnes 1991:243–244).

Roman officials (such as prefects and procurators) were appointed personally by the Roman emperor and held accountable by him as well. These appointments were reciprocal relationships where favours (such as positions of influence and wealth) were given in return for personal allegiance to the prestige and power of the emperor (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 3 [Kindle version]). The local client kings were adjudged by how they represented the interest of the emperor and, by extension, the interest of the Roman empire. It is foreseeable that the local client kings employed the same system among the local elite, and used the patronage system to maintain personal prestige as well.

For the compliant local elite, patronage held tantalising and immediate prospects such as prestige and wealth, but also future prospects such as Roman citizenship (Goodman 2007: Chapter 4 [Kindle edition]). In all likelihood, such relationships flourished because potential clients sought out patrons. Roman rule started in Judea exactly because the warring successors to the Maccabean throne sought the patronage of Pompey (Marshak 2010). For a potential client (the local Judean elite) to refuse patronage (from the Roman overlords) could also be dangerous. If patronage was the “law of the land”, then to refuse it was to convey disloyalty to the emperor and other Roman overlords. The local Judean elite was probably coaxed into patron-client relationships by means of the proverbial carrot and stick: to seek out a powerful patron promised great rewards, and a secure future. To refuse an offer from a patron, and deny a patronage relationship, led to a far less secure future.

In reality, the Romans simply did not have enough military resources to compel their vast territories to comply with their imperial agenda. Patronage ensured that the Romans could rule vast territories with a smaller military force and bureaucracy (Schwartz 2010: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]). This philosophy worked particularly well in other Roman territories, since it created the illusion that the local political system was given a position of influence. For the Romans, it prevented the nightmare situation of local kings and rulers gathering armies to revolt against Rome. There were other significant governance advantages to the Romans by setting up local client rulers: it created a buffer between the Romans and local population. It was up to the client rulers to maintain peace by controlling the local population, but also to

represent Roman interest in a local territory. Local client rule made actual Roman rule seem more legitimate to the local population. Local client rulers had a far superior knowledge of local customs, geography and people of interest. By appointing local client rulers, the Romans tapped into this knowledge and thereby ensured effective governance and gathering of tribute.

The net result was that patronage kept vast power in the hands of the few. It concentrated and maintained such power, and ensured that power remained hierarchical (Horsley 1987:7). This social reality is reflected in the life of the quintessential Judean client king, Herod the Great. Although ethnically an Idumean, he was appointed by the Romans since there was a suspicion towards the ambition of the Hasmoneans to overthrow Roman influence in Judea. Herod proved to be efficient, brutal and savvy in how he dealt with the political realities of the Roman empire. He himself managed to survive political upheaval as his successive patrons (Pompey, Anthony and Augustus) fought one another in the Roman civil war. In the process, he became fabulously wealthy and powerful. But it can also be argued that the rule of Herod negated the desired outcome of Roman patronage in the long term. The ideal of Roman patronage was to forge stable relationships between the local elite and the Romans. However, Herod destroyed the base of reliable local rulers. He openly killed strong contenders for his throne even among his own family. Augustus caustically remarked that “it's better to be Herod's pig than his son” (Berlin & Overman 2002:36). At least pigs would stay alive under the protection of Jewish religious laws, but some of his stronger family members (and even sons) were not that fortunate.

More importantly, Herod the Great diminished the influence of the high priest in Judea. For centuries, the high priests acted as a type of local political governor under the various empires that ruled over Judea after the Exile. This provided stability in the region since the high priests ensured a position of political leadership (by virtue of the influence of their office). Herod respected the office itself, but he circumvented a possible political clash between the high priests and himself by simply appointing high priests at whim. Since the high priests at the time of his ascension were Hasmoneans (and therefore potential political opponents), he chose high priests from qualified families outside of Jerusalem — like Alexandria and

Babylonia (Goodman 1987:38). Although candidates from these families were allowed to serve in the office of high priests, they probably lacked the local Judean knowledge, networks and patronage. This left them more dependent on the patronage of Herod. Herod went one step further to ensure absolute power by replacing the high priest at regular intervals. At the same time, he made the most of his Roman patronage, built several fortresses in Judea, and accumulated a foreign mercenary army loyal to himself (Horsley & Hanson 1985:34).

This led to the collapse of an effective local client elite through which the Roman could rule after the death of Herod the Great. Not only was the Herodian family left with weak candidates for rule (the inept Archelaus was removed soon after becoming the client ruler in Judea), but the local high priestly family lacked local connection and may have appeared illegitimate to the Judeans. This pattern of the collapse of the local elite continued after the death of Herod the Great. In the 33 years before the fall of Jerusalem in the Jewish War, a total of seven high priests were appointed and removed. Infamously, one high priest was removed after a day of being in office (Goodman 1987:41). This meant responsibility fell increasingly upon the Roman procurators to maintain political stability — perhaps more so than other Roman territories.

This is exactly the line that Goodman (1987:7–25) argues when he looks at causes for the Jewish War. In his opinion, five possible causes can be suggested for the War: the first possible cause was the incompetence of Roman officials who could have quelled social unrest with softer diplomatic skills, but instead opted for physical violence. The problem with this explanation is that some of the Roman officials were promoted after their stint in Roman Palestine. To be sure, some Roman governors were singled out by their compatriots for inept handling of the Judean situation, but that is not true of all the procurators and prefects. The second possible cause is the inherent oppressive nature of the Roman rule in Judea. That would have negated good governance from some of the procurators in the long run. The question here is whether Roman rule was so much more oppressive in Judea compared to other Roman territories. It is unlikely that Roman Palestine was singled out for harsher treatment by the Romans. The third possible cause is that Jewish religious sensibilities were trampled on and led to a religious war against the Romans. The

problem here is that, although instances of Roman insensitivity around the Temple and Passover can be found, the Romans also permitted many extraordinary freedoms to the Jewish people compared to other religious groupings in the Roman empire. The fourth possible cause given by Goodman, was the developing class tensions as explored in this dissertation. But then, why were these class tensions allowed to simmer and escalate to such an extent if civil government and a local elite were available to address the issues? So lastly, Goodman argues that the most important cause for the inevitable war was the collapse of an effective local elite who could represent the non-elite and the Roman interests to the best of all involved.

This left early Roman Palestine in a vulnerable political landscape. Coupled with increasing economic hardships (§ 6.1), this likely caused an increased collapse of peasantry families. This collapse of peasantry families led to homelessness and banditry in early Roman Palestine (§ 6.3). This meant that not only elite urban leadership structures weakened, but that it was likely that even local non-elite leadership structures in various rural communities started to falter.

#### 4.1.4 NON-ELITE JUDEAN POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

By and large, only the elite (as well as some of their dependent retainers) were literate and could produce texts (Kuhn 2010: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]). Textual data from the Judean elite (especially Josephus) provides a depiction of how the local Judean elite viewed both the Roman rule and their non-elite compatriots. In line with the reasoning of the chapter, it is no surprise then that Josephus preferred Roman patronage, and seemed to have despised the more radical element of the Judean non-elite (§ 1.9). However, the search for the ideology of the non-elite becomes harder due to both the illiterate status of many of the non-elite, as well as the possible suppression of such discourse by the elite. This calls for greater extrapolation from various cross-disciplines (with much care taken with the danger of anachronism and ethnocentrism); but it also warrants a closer look at textual data that did narrate the socio-political environment from a non-elite perspective — such as the Gospels.

In terms of cross-disciplines, the social theories of Scott are of some use to the research question here. Scott (1980:18–19) studied the peasantry of modern Southeast Asia, and postulated that the peasantry desire “politics of dignity”. This emphasis on dignity spouts from the various injustices that the peasantry suffers due to their relative position of powerlessness. As frustration and anger developed among the peasantry, they were likely to develop an alternate vision of how a political system should serve their concerns. Mostly such political systems are built around the concept of distributive justice. With distributive justice, the main concern is how resources are equitably used, allocated and distributed for the well-being of all, not just the elite.

The problem that the peasantry face is that they are unable to voice their alternative political vision on a broader societal platform — due to their position of relative powerlessness. According to Camara (1971:30–31), this effort to voice an alternate political vision would be met with repression and violence by the elite. Therefore, the peasantry develop what Scott calls a “hidden transcript”. The hidden transcript is developed in an inner circle, and is a secretive way of communicating this vision of an alternate society among the peasantry. This secretive approach is shaped by the fear of retribution from the elite. This would be a form of heteroloquy (§ 1.4.1.3). The opposite of the hidden transcript is the “public transcript”, which is the dominant ortholoquy from the elite, whereby they shape the political ideologies of society to serve their class concerns (Scott 1980:18–19). This theory is attractive to the political scenario of early Roman Palestine, where popular non-elite leaders such as prophets and messianic figures provided a discourse different from the public transcript. Certainly, their discourse was filled with elements of a politics of dignity. Consider how Jesus’ proclamation in Luke 4:18 reflects the desire for dignity and an alternate social reality for the non-elite: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (NRSV).

The question is what was the basis for an alternate vision for society for the Judean and Galilean non-elite? Fortunately, glimpses are given in the textual data when the leaders among the non-elite are given voice. Two examples will suffice: according to

Josephus, the Fourth Philosophy developed as a rural Galilean social sect (*Ant.* 18.1). They protested the payment of taxation and tribute to the Roman elite. They considered themselves to be under the reign of God (Horsley & Hanson 1985:192–194). It is interesting that Josephus lists this social group with the other religious Jewish sects. This movement rather seems more political than religious to the modern reader. But the point is that due to the embedded nature of religion and politics in early Roman Palestine, the influence of societal domains on each other cannot be underestimated. The Fourth Philosophy points towards an earlier Israelite tradition where Israel was a theophany — the idealised Israel of old was perceived to be a kingdom of God. Israel was covenantally bound to God and to his laws. Society itself was to be ruled in light of the covenantal righteousness of God. To be Jewish was to be free from political overlords, and to submit freely under God. This freedom was to be especially from foreign political overlords. This was certainly the driving ideology of the Exodus narrative. The Fourth Philosophy's drive against taxation also had a strong precedent in 2 Samuel 24. In this narrative of David, a strong indictment is given by God against compiling a census. This census was for the purpose of strengthening the political rule of David in Israel, and would have made taxation of his subjects more efficient (Horsley & Hanson 1985:192–194). Ultimately this act was severely punished by God. It seems then that this non-elite social sect held the concept of the rule of God as an actual and viable political solution.

Certainly, what this political solution would entail, and how it would operate is vague from available sources. But it is clear that the concept of the Kingdom of God provided a different measurement of justice to the extractive and retributive justice system imposed by the Judean and Roman elite. Consider the other example: namely the message of the popular non-elite prophet, John the Baptist. According to Luke he preached a message of judgment which would measure the kind of justice practiced in Judea:

Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire". And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise". Even tax collectors came to be

baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you”.

(Lk 3:9–13, NRSV)

Religious renewal meant that the political interaction between those who are powerful, and those who are powerless should change. Resources such as food must be shared in an equitable way, and those who have power over others due to their office (such as the tax collectors) should behave in such a way that is considered covenantally fair. This tapped into a longer Israelite tradition of covenantal justice, and how society should function as a whole.

#### 4.1.5 SUMMARY OF THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The political landscape of early Roman Palestine was shaped by the elite/non-elite divide that is characteristic of an advanced agrarian society. The divide was further exacerbated by the impact of Roman imperial policies. The Judean elite solidified their power, and advanced their agenda, on the basis of Roman patronage. But in the process, they were bound to the agenda and concerns of their Roman patrons via the social mechanism of reciprocity. This meant that Roman imperial concerns overwhelmed local Judean concerns and problems.

This also meant that the Judean and Galilean non-elite found themselves in a hierarchical and extractive society, where resources flowed towards Jerusalem and Rome (§ 6.1). The non-elite were relatively powerless to impact the political landscape of early Roman Palestine, and to advocate for greater social justice. It is likely that this scenario led to a hidden transcript among the non-elite. A hidden transcript is a secretive discourse that advocates for an alternative vision for society. This alternative vision included a sense of justice for the non-elite, and was mostly distributive in its outlook. Prophets and popular social movements were excellent examples (and vehicles) for such hidden transcripts in early Roman Palestine. It is not inconceivable that some Gospel texts may also, given their first-century imperial context, exhibit notions corresponding with the idea of hidden transcripts. It is argued that Luke 19:11-27 may be an example of critique against the Judean political elite.

## 4.2 THE PARABLE OF THE THRONE CLAIMANT AND POLITICS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"

(Lk 19:11–27, ESV)

## 4.2.1 POLITICS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE AND THE PARABLE OF THE THRONE CLAIMANT

### 4.2.1.1 The parable of the Throne Claimant as prophetic discourse on the political domain of early Roman Palestine

The parable of the Throne Claimant (also known as the Parable of the Ten Minas), has often been interpreted as a reservation about the imminence of the παρουσία, and an example of the delayed eschatological view of Luke (Guy 1997:119). It also has been popularised as a strong incentive on diligence (while the παρουσία is delayed). It has even become a morality tale on “homespun capitalism” in Western societies (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:305).

However, the strong political connection between the parable itself, and the historical context of early Roman Palestine should not be underestimated. The parable links strongly with the preceding passage, which deals with the salvation of Zacchaeus (Lk 19:9). It also has clear connections to the passage thereafter, which narrates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Lk 19:28–40). Both these adjacent passages have strong political undertones. In the preceding passage, the narrative focus is on Zacchaeus: “he was a chief tax collector and he was rich” (Lk 19:2, NRSV). The terminology of “chief tax collector” may indicate that Zacchaeus had oversight over other tax collectors in a geographical region (Green 1997:668). This type of position was most likely granted under the patronage of the Judean or Roman elite. He was “rich” because of his political connections, and is depicted as part of the Judean elite economic ecosystem (Lk 19:2). During his interaction with Jesus, he has a radical change of heart, and decides to make reparations to his victims. “Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much’” (Lk 19:8, NRSV).

As a result of this radical change of heart, he is called “a son of Abraham” by Jesus — since “salvation has come to this house” (Lk 19:9, NRSV). This narrative fits well with the suggested ideologies of the political domain of the model of the influence of

Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013). The elite generated wealth with opportunities created by political patronage. Taxation served the purposes of the Judean elite and Roman overlords in early Roman Palestine. Zacchaeus himself acknowledges the unjust nature of tax collection, and promises to do right by those he defrauded. In so doing he becomes a son of Abraham — which lies on the opposite spectrum of elite patronage towards the covenantal ideals of the non-elite. Instead of continuing with the political realities of reciprocity (in the form of patronage), Zacchaeus embraces covenantal solidarity with his compatriots (irrespective of their economic class), and treated them according to covenantal justice, and promised to redistribute what he extorted from them.<sup>41</sup>

This change of heart was so unusual that Luke makes clear that it is evidence that “salvation” came to that house. It also serves to set up a renewed expectation among the witnesses of this remarkable story that the kingdom was “to appear immediately” — ὅτι παραχρῆμα μέλλει ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναφάνεσθαι (Lk 19:11, NA<sup>27</sup>). Such was the unexpected impact of the conversion of a rich man (who used political patronage for his own gain), that this was an indicative sign to the audience that a change of the political realities of Roman patronage was due. A political era of covenantal justice was imminent.

In the case of the passage after the parable, the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem has even more clear connections to the political domain of early Roman Palestine. Here Jesus was hailed as a political saviour by the crowds: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” (Lk 19:38, NRSV). The symbolic use of palm branches and a colt — as indication of royalty — was not lost on the crowds.<sup>42</sup> This expression of the

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<sup>41</sup> Refer to Addendum A where the contrasting elite and non-elite political ideologies of solidarity and reciprocity is depicted.

<sup>42</sup> The connection between the use of the various images mentioned with the Triumphal Entry of Jesus in Luke 19, and the Israelite kings have a rich tradition (Dinkler 2015:539). Examples include: the crowning of Jehu where “they hurried and each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, saying, ‘Jehu is king!’” (2 Kings 9:13, NASB). This reminds of how the crowd placed garments under Jesus as they

messianic claims of the Jesus movement enraged their enemies. They clearly understood what was indicated by these actions and demanded that it should be rectified: “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, ‘Teacher, rebuke Your disciples’” (Lk 19:39, NASB).

Lastly, the parable of the Throne Claimant itself is no less political. The parable tells the story of a nobleman who leaves “to get royal power for himself” (Lk 19:12, NRSV). He gives his servants instructions on how to use the resources he provides for them. These servants are ostensibly his clients (Moxnes 1991:253). They are instructed to engage in “business” — which is given by Luke in the imperative form — *πραγματεύσασθε* (Lk 19:13, NA<sup>27</sup>). He has political enemies who send a delegation who tries to obstruct him (Lk 19:14). They appeal to the claimant’s overlord that he should not “rule” (*βασιλεύσαι*, NA<sup>27</sup>) over them. Upon his return, the Throne Claimant uses his new political authority to enact revenge on his enemies. As a sign of absolute authority, he orders others to slaughter them (Lk 19:27), as well as punish his servant-clients that did not serve his interest well (Lk 19:26).

In order to proceed to the exegesis of this particular pericope, a solution must first be found of how the parable links to the preceding story of Zacchaeus, and to the following passage of the Triumphal Entry of Jesus (Lk 19:28–40). This is an important detail since it will provide an exegetical matrix for understanding the narrative function of the parable. In many ways, the answer to this question will determine the outcome of the exegesis of the pericope. For some commentators, the link of the parable is primarily with the Triumphal Entry (Guy 1997:119). The parable is told because Jesus was “near Jerusalem” (Lk 19:11, NRSV). The parable is seen as an anticipation of the triumphal entry of Jesus. The basic structure of the parable also fits some of the narrative elements of the triumphal entry in Luke 19: Jesus enters Jerusalem as a messianic claimant to the throne and is rebuked by religious antagonists (Lk 11:39). In that sense, the parable is seen as a form of expectation

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seated him on the colt. Passages such Zechariah 9:9 connect the use of a colt with the Judean messianic ideal: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (NRSV).

management of the type of eschatology his followers should anticipate. Jesus' audience is correct in assuming that the Kingdom of God is to appear — but they are wrong in assuming that it is to appear immediately. Rather, Jesus must first suffer by the hands of his enemies and then at a later stage return to exact vengeance on his enemies and grant rewards on his faithful citizens. The parable then becomes a moral injunction to faithfulness and fruitful waiting among the disciples in the face of a delayed παρουσία.

However, this interpretative matrix leaves the exegete with numerous difficulties, and some distasteful theological implications. As Marshall (1978:702) notes: "Jülicher claimed that the original form of the parable was meant simply to teach a moral lesson about using the gifts which God has given to man. Dibelius vigorously criticised such views, and noted the possibility of the use of metaphors which are 'half-allegorical' and lead to fuller allegorisation". Should the premise be accepted that the parable pre-empts the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, then Jesus becomes the "nobleman" in the parable that leaves his country to receive a kingdom.

Some of the problems that such a scenario present include: the parable uses the term — ἄνθρωπός τις εὐγενής (Lk 19:12, NA<sup>27</sup>) — which is never used as a descriptive term of Jesus and his political aims, but rather is an expression used to describe Gentile nobility.<sup>43</sup> If the enemies of Jesus are to send a delegation to protest his royal ascent, where would they go? As noted by some, a human delegation could hardly go to heaven to make an appeal before God against the rule of Jesus over a divine kingdom (Garland 2012:760). More worrisome, is the moral qualities of the Throne Claimant in the parable. He is depicted as harsh (αὐστηρός) by the last unfortunate servant — and thereupon acknowledges himself to be αὐστηρός. He reaps where he does not sow (which indicates a form of injustice), slaughters his enemies without mercy, and severely rebukes a servant who does not

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<sup>43</sup> Consider how Paul contrasts the followers of Jesus with the Gentile nobility: "Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth (εὐγενεῖς, NA<sup>27</sup>). But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong" (1 Cor 1:26–27, NRSV).

live up to his lofty expectation. Fitzmeyer (2008: 1233) extrapolates on this particular concern with the following: “This parable, in its Lucan form, has again been considered as a mark of Lucan anti-Semitism, with its frank reference to the slaughter of Jesus’ enemies, ‘his fellow-citizens.’” Garland (2012:760) goes as far as to describe the implications of this particular exegetical stance as follows:

This bloodlust characterizes the world’s tyrants, not Jesus. He is the one who is slaughtered in giving his life for others but asks the Father to forgive the perpetrators (23:34). Weinert rightly concludes that the narrative features of supposedly sending an embassy to oppose Jesus’ divine enthronement and the vengeful treatment of enemies “are allegorically unintelligible from a Christian point of view”.

Luke’s depiction of the actual entry of Jesus into Jerusalem sketches a different picture compared to this parabolic depiction of the Throne Claimant. Instead of the inhabitants of Jerusalem hating Jesus, he is welcomed with praises and singing (Lk 19:14). Instead of demanding high margins of profit from his client-servants, he adopts a position of humility by entering the city on a colt. His demeanour is so humble that others throw their cloaks on the donkey and put Jesus on it (Lk 19:35). Instead of plotting revenge on his enemies, he weeps over Jerusalem in pity (Lk 19:41). Instead of reverting to ἀύστηρός in response to his antagonists’ reaction, he makes it clear that other enemies will destroy Jerusalem, since they reject him as the true friend of Jerusalem and (by implication) rather embraced their actual enemies:

Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.

(Lk 19:43–44, NRSV)

Rather the solution of defining the connection between the parable of Throne Claimant and the adjacent passages in Luke 19, may rather lie in the strong

connection between the conversion of Zacchaeus and the parable of the Throne Claimant. In Luke 19:11, the parable of the Throne Claimant is told by Jesus “while they were listening to these things” (NASB). In other words, as the audience was considering the implications of the conversion of Zacchaeus, Jesus told the parable of the Throne Claimant. The conclusion the audience made is spelled out by Luke: “...they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately” (Lk 19:11, NRSV). It is argued here that the conversion of Zacchaeus offers a safer interpretative background for the parable of the Throne Claimant, since Luke offers the parable as a commentary on the assumptions made by the audience upon Zacchaeus’ conversion. Therefore, the parable is not a moral warning unto faithfulness and diligence for a delayed παρουσία; nor is the nobleman of the parable a metaphor for Jesus. Rather the parable is a correction of the expectation that the Kingdom is truly to appear immediately. And this expectation was based on the perception that the Judean elite and their retainers are starting to have a conversion of the heart (of which Zacchaeus is an example in Luke 19). The Kingdom will not appear immediately as presumed by the audience of Lk 19:11, since something stands in the way of the conversion of the hearts of the Judean elite as a social group: the Judean elite themselves are in a difficult political position, since they are the clients of the Throne Claimant.

Jesus, in the Triumphal Entry, is rather presented as opposite to the αὐστηρός Throne Claimant: according to Luke’s understanding he is the humble king. To see the Throne Claimant as metaphorical for Jesus is to break the Lukan dictum for the ideal messiah. The Triumphal Entry rather echoes the prophetic ideal of Zechariah: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9, NRSV). In this ideal the messiah is victorious, but also humble. The Throne Claimant represents the collective political values of the ἄνθρωπος τις εὐγενής, but among the Jesus movement there ought to be no embrace of such values.

How then should the connection be described between the narrative of the conversion of Zacchaeus, the parable of Throne Claimant, and the Triumphal Entry

of Jesus in Luke 19? It is argued here that the parable is a reaction on the conversion of Zacchaeus. The true political state of the Judean elite is further elaborated on by means of the parable of the Throne Claimant. Furthermore, the parable acts as a contrast to the Triumphal Entry of Jesus in Luke 19. Where the Throne Claimant is αὐστηρός, Jesus is humble.

With preliminary observations now made, and the exegetical connection between the passages in Luke 19 proposed, the following socio-rhetorical textures were considered in the interpretation of the passage.

#### 4.2.2 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE PARABLE OF THE THRONE CLAIMANT

##### 4.2.2.1 Dyadic and Legal Contracts and Agreements

Robbins (1996a:79) defines dyadic contracts as a contract system that “crosscuts the formal contracts of the culture, serving as the glue that holds individuals together for long or short terms and enabling the social interdependence necessary for life”. Such dyadic contracts were based on the Mediterranean social value of reciprocity. Patronage served as a prime example of dyadic contracts. In the parable of the Throne Claimant, the ten servants can be presented as clients to the Throne Claimant. “The servants were trusted associates or agents of the prince, and they should be regarded as clients, not slaves. Their reward may have been that of command of a toparchy, an administrative unit comprising several villages” (Moxnes 1991:253).

The elements of the narrative fit the social conventions of patronage well. A person in position of wealth and power (the Throne Claimant), gives material resources to his clients who would otherwise not have such resources (hence their position as servants). The servant-clients are expected to contribute to the honour and interest of the patron (the Throne Claimant). The glue of this social obligation is provided by the principle of reciprocity and the Mediterranean understanding of dyadic contracts. The servants are therefore severely judged by their patron on whether they actually

contribute to his interest in his absence. In contrast, the “citizens” who hate him and position themselves as his “enemies” (Lk 19:14,27), attack his honour and are therefore “slayed” by him. A further indication that the servants are not mere slaves, but clients, are the fabulous rewards for the faithful clients — they are given ten and five cities respectively. No mere slaves, who had little to no social status, would be given such immense material rewards. Lastly, the parable is closely linked to the conversion of Zacchaeus, who, as a chief tax collector, was apparently appointed over other tax collectors, and likely came to this high-ranking position because he serves the interest of his patron(s) well. The circumstances of the client-servants in the parable echo the actual circumstances of Zacchaeus.

With the conversion of Zacchaeus, the audience makes the assumption that the kingdom of covenantal justice is due immediately. This assumption is made on the basis of the heart conversion of a member (or at least client) of the Judean elite. The question is what this expectation of the nature of the Kingdom was? In other words, what should this kingdom look like? In this sense Luke gives various glimpses elsewhere in the Gospel, but consider the description of the ministry of John the Baptist in Luke 3:<sup>44</sup>

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”. And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise”. Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount

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<sup>44</sup> This passage (Lk 3:7–15) is also used in § 4.1.4 to illustrate the possible values of the non-elite social group in Luke. It should be no surprise then that when Zacchaeus turns towards these values in Luke 19:1–11 Jesus welcomes him as a “son of Abraham”.

prescribed for you”. Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages”. As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah.

(Lk 3:7–15, NRSV)

Note the close resemblance to the conversion of Zacchaeus — he is a “tax collector” who is declared to be a “son of Abraham”. He is not falsely claiming to be a son of Abraham. He becomes a covenantal Israelite by virtue of deciding to “collect no more than the amount ... prescribed”. He also promises to cease extorting money from people (by making amends to his victims) and to share in his wealth (his “two coats”). It is reasonable to assume the audience of Zacchaeus’ conversion in Luke 19 had similar expectations of the covenantal Kingdom. For Judea to embrace being covenantal sons of Abraham again, wealth had to be used in a different way.

Jesus warns by means of the parable of the Throne Claimant that such “immediate” expectations were premature. The elite and their clients are in a systemic political prison that makes the conversion of Zacchaeus unique — and not the new political norm. The Judean elite are the ten servants of the parable. Despite their political power and wealth (the “ten cities” and the “five cities”) they are still only dependants of the Throne Claimant. This means that they are in fact ensnared by their dyadic contract to their Roman and Herodian overlords. It is not so easy to have a conversion as in the case of Zacchaeus, because they are bound to the honour and the interest of their patrons. The question then is what is the nature and disposition of these patron towards their clients? Are they *ἀύστηρός* like the Throne Claimant, or humble like Jesus? Here the social value of limited good sheds some light.

#### **4.2.2.2 Limited, Insufficient, and Overabundant Goods**

Another applicable socio-cultural view to consider with the parable of the Throne Claimant is “limited good”. Robbins (1996a:84) defines “limited good” as the concept that “all good things — food, land, honour and standing — were in fixed quantities

and short supply. Because their quantities could not be increased, if one peasant gained a greater share of any one of them than heretofore, he was thought to have done so at the cost of all his fellows". Limited good creates a quandary for the social values of the peasant. Capitalism (and business) would be morally abhorrent to the peasantry, since it transgresses the concept of limited good: in the view of the peasant, money did not multiply through trading and compound interest, but rather profit increased because the money was taken from someone else. For someone to make money, someone else had to lose that same amount of money. In societies with a strong group identity, such actions would amount to shame; individual profiteering led to the suffering of someone else in the group.

This opens the matter of different possible perspectives on the parable of the Throne Claimant. These different perspectives are informed by the audience's social class. According to the Throne Claimant, the profitless servant is *πονηρός* — which is translated as "worthless" (NASB) or "wicked" (NRSV). Conversely, the profitable servants are judged to be "good" (*ἀγαθός*) and "faithful" (*πιστός*). The elite Throne Claimant is therefore making moral judgment on his clients on the basis of how they increased his own honour and interests. For the elite Throne Claimant, the concept of limited good does not come into play at all. Rather a lack of profit would cause him shame. The question is how the clients (or servants) of the parable themselves would have perceived this task of "business" allocated to them? More so, the question is how the audience in Luke 19 would have perceived this burden on the clients?

Only the last servant is given a voice in the parable. According to this servant, he perceives his patron (and therefore the actions of the patron) in the following way: "for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh (*αὐστηρός*) man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow" (Lk 19:21, NRSV). This is an accurate reflection of the social value of limited good (Rohrbaugh 1993:35). According to this social value, nothing can be done to increase the value of the material resources given, unless it is done so at the expense of fellow countrymen ("reap what you did not sow"). By taking the social value of limited good into account, the last client therefore subverts the ascribed moral qualities by the Throne Claimant,

and turns it on its head: is the demands of the Throne Claimant really just? Are the actions of the “faithful” servants really “good”? And is the last servant really “worthless” or “wicked”? When limited good is taken into account the actions of the last servant become intelligible. By preserving the money in a handkerchief, he fulfils his obligation as a steward (according to reciprocity) and does not lose what was given by his patron (Garland 2012:761). However, he also fulfils his social obligation to his community by not taking from his fellow countryman. In this sense the parable becomes subverted and the last servant may actually be “good” and the prior servants “wicked”, exactly because they are willing to take from their compatriots to promote the selfish interests of their patron.

Here the conflict between class interests becomes fundamental for the audience. From an elite perspective, the Throne Claimant is just in his demand for increase. The first two servants are commendable because they serve elite interest. Furthermore, they are rewarded and given more — so they can ostensibly increase elite interests all the more. However, from a non-elite perspective this command is morally unjust. The client is caught between his social obligation towards his patron and his social obligation to his community. The client is caught in an impossible moral position. The best the client can do in such a situation is to try and preserve the interest of the patron without breaking his social obligations to his community.

How then would the narrative audience of Luke 19 perceive the moral qualities of the Throne Claimant and his various clients?<sup>45</sup> In Luke 19 they react positively to the change of heart of Zacchaeus and his willingness to give financial restitution to those

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<sup>45</sup> There is some dispute of who made up the audience in Luke 19:11–27. It seems from the narrative that it was the same audience that witnessed Jesus’ interaction with Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1–11. This audience is described in Luke 19:7 as follows: “When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner’” (Luke 19:7, NASB). It is tempting to associate the audience on this basis with religious leaders (such as the Pharisees); who are often found to be disagreeing with Jesus in the Gospels (Johnson 1982:145). Green (1997:671) warns that the line between the disciples of Jesus and the religious antagonists of Jesus often become blurred at this stage of the Gospel narrative. Be it as it may, the point remains that the audience wholeheartedly approved of the conversion of Zacchaeus and how it affected his stance on money and extortion. This places the audience as either in the non-elite class (or at least very sympathetic to the non-elite cause).

wronged by his actions. This is seen as a sign that the Kingdom is to appear immediately. It is therefore more likely that they held non-elite class interest at heart, and despised the elite class interest that Zacchaeus represented (or at least they were very empathetic to non-elite interests). To them the parable may have been shocking and a rude awakening concerning their high hopes: what they presumed would shortly ensue is denied. The harsh realities of Roman patronage squashes all hope of covenantal justice. The honourable last servant is summarily pronounced as wicked, and the enemies of the Throne Claimant slaughtered. The ἀύστηρός Throne Claimant looms large over the political landscape of early Roman Palestine.

#### 4.2.3 THE INTERTEXTURE TEXTURE OF THE PARABLE OF THE THRONE CLAIMANT

##### 4.2.3.1 Oral-Scibal Intertexture

This non-elite perspective on the parable of the Throne Claimant is developed even more by Eusebius (Rohrbaugh 1993:36). Eusebius links the concept of limited good, and the subversion of moral qualities in the parable of the Throne Claimant, with a passage in the Gospel of the Nazoreans (suggested structure inserted):

But since the Gospel (written) in Hebrew characters which has come into our hands enters the threat not against the man who had hid (the talent), but against him who had lived dissolutely—

For he (the master) had three servants:

A one who squandered his master's substance with harlots and flute-girls,

B one who multiplied the gain,

C and one who hid the talent;

and accordingly,

C' one was accepted (with joy),

B' another merely rebuked,

A' and another cast into prison

I wonder whether in Matthew the threat which is uttered after the word against the man who did nothing may refer not to him, but by epanalepsis to the first who had feasted and drunk with the drunken.

(Eusebius, *Theoph.* [Schneemelcher 1990:149]).

Eusebius quotes from the lost Gospel of the Nazoreans. He reflects on his own doubt over the apparent values portrayed by the parable of the Talents in Matthew 25. Eusebius clearly reads an inversion into the parable, and attributes the possible confusion to a rhetorical device called epanalepsis. That is to say, the same clause (or wording of a clause) is repeated at the end of the sentence. This device would allow for an interpretation where the servant of premise A is cast into prison, the servant of premise B is rebuked for gaining profit and transgressing the concept of limited good, and servant of premise C turns out to be the good and faithful servant. Here the concern of Eusebius that the parable may be interpreted according to elite interest is in full display. To give an answer to this concern, Eusebius suggests a reconfiguration of the parable of Matthew by comparing it to the parable in the Gospel of Nazoreans.

Although this quotation from Eusebius holds promising possibilities of the exegetical line of thought followed here, it also presents several problems. Eusebius himself links the parable to the version given in Matthew, not the version in Luke. There is also no way of corroborating the parable as given by Eusebius, since there are no copies of the Gospel of the Nazoreans to compare the version of the parable of Eusebius to. In that sense the relative value of the parable in the Gospel of the Nazoreans diminishes for the present exegetical task — and no further exegesis will be attempted on it to contribute to the dissertation. However, it does emphasise an important point in connection with what has been discussed already: the perspective of the audience (both of the implied and actual reader) is important here. The class concerns of the reader plays an important role in ascribing moral qualities to both the Throne Claimant and the client-servants. This distinction between elite interest and non-elite interest is so important that it moves Eusebius to go beyond the text of Matthew 25:14–29, and employ the Gospel of the Nazoreans, to clarify the actual moral weight of the parable.

Should the elite interest in the parable be taken at face value, in which case the Throne Claimant has the moral high ground, it leaves its non-elite audience in a startling place concerning the systemic injustices they faced. However, should the parable be taken from the non-elite perspective, the last servant holds the moral high ground, and the parable becomes a strong critique of elite Judean politics in early Roman Palestine. The first exegetical line (the elite interest) simply does not reflect the broader theological concerns of Luke for the poor and outcast, nor is it likely to be an accurate reflection of the expectations of the audience in the narrative itself.

Two other comparable textual sources for the oral-scribal intertexture should be considered: Mark 13:34 and Matthew 25:14–29.

It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

(Mk 13:34, NRSV)

For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many

things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

(Mt 25:14–30, NRSV)

The parable in Mark 13 is brief, and resembles the parable in Luke only in the most general way. A man leaves on a journey (no details are given of the social status of the man or the purpose of his departure). He leaves his servants in charge of his household. No instructions are given on what to do with his household, except to be on watch. The parable is used as a warning to be diligent for the coming of the “master of the house” (Mk 13:35).

The parable in Matthew 25:14–29 contains more details and appears closer to the parable of the Throne Claimant in Lk 19. A man of means gives material resources to his servants. The servants treat the financial resources in various ways. The first two servants make profit by business (or trade), and the last servant merely keeps the money safe with no intention of trade. In Matthew, the servant hides the money by digging a hole in the ground. In Luke, the servant hides the money in a handkerchief. The amount of money mentioned may account for the difference in keeping the money safe. A mina (the Lukan version) is worth far less than a talent (the Matthew version). In both versions, the patron judges the last servant. In both versions, the patron is portrayed by the last servant as harsh and merciless (*σκληρός* in Matthew 25:24, and *ἀστυερός* in Luke 19:22).

However, despite the proximity between these two parables, several differences also exist between the parable in Luke 19:11–27 and the parable in Matthew 25:14–29. There is an overt political focus with the details inserted by Luke. The patron is not merely a man leaving for a while. He is a throne claimant and therefore in the position to receive great political power. He has political enemies that refute his claim, and he has citizens who hates him (Lk 19:14). He is dependent on another political overlord to ratify his power — hence he has to leave to state his case before this patron. He is ironically also in the position of being a client to a patron; he not only binds his servants to him as patron, but he himself is bound to another that will decide his fate as a throne claimant. Because another political overlord will decide the validity of his claim, his citizens send a delegation to appeal this decision, and block the ratification of his rule: “We do not want this man to rule over us” (Lk 19:14, NRSV). Furthermore, the political consequences of political rebellion against the Throne Claimant is escalated in Luke. In Matthew, the last servant is rebuked and removed from the circle of patronage (he is cast into the “outer darkness” [Mt 25:29]). In Luke, the servant is rebuked, but the real wrath of the Throne Claimant is kept for his subversive political enemies. They are slaughtered in his presence (Lk 19:27).

These differences have left the connection between the two parables under dispute (Fitzmeyer 2008:1228). It is unclear whether Luke used the Matthean version of the parable (as the basis of the parable of the Throne Claimant) or from another unknown source, but it is unlikely that Matthew used the Lukan version. This is due to the various additions found in Luke: it is unlikely that Matthew would have removed the details found in Luke (such as that the patron is a nobleman who sets out to claim a throne). It is more likely that the Lukan version is a narrative amplification of the Matthew version; or that Luke used a different textual source (perhaps a source that both authors use as basis for the parables [Jeremias 1972:27]). Which of these options are preferable is open for speculation, but the point here is that although the basic elements are similar between the parables of Matthew 25:14–29 and Luke 19:11–27, there is a narrative amplification that happens to the parable in Luke 19:11–27. This reconfiguration of the parable may then also suggest a changed meaning in Luke 19:11–27.

According to Robbins (1986a:51), narrative amplification consists of “extended composition containing recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration”. It is hard to ascertain whether Luke actually used the Matthew account, and therefore it is not safe grounds to assume that recitation<sup>46</sup> as a rhetorical device is used by Luke. It may be that Luke applied the rhetorical device of recontextualization,<sup>47</sup> since there are many like elements between the two parables. However, the rhetorical device most likely used by Luke is reconfiguration. The Matthean parable (or mutual textual source) is reconfigured by adding the political details in Luke. Reconfiguration “is recounting a situation in a manner that makes the later event ‘new’ in relation to a previous event” (Robbins 1986a:50).

The Matthew context for the parable of Talents is various discourses on the eschatological expectations of the Jesus movement (Johnson 1982:143). The parable itself is surrounded by other parables that encourage faithful waiting (such as the parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servant (Mt 24:45–51); the parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Mt 25:1–12), and the instructions on the Judgment of the Nations (Mt 25:31–46). All these passages of discourse are set on the backdrop of Matthew 24:44 — “Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour” (NRSV). It seems reasonable then that many exegetes give a similar interpretation to the parable of the Throne Claimant, namely that the moral of the parable is that faithful and diligent waiting for the Son of Man will be rewarded, and the inept servant punished. The question, however, is if the parable itself has been reconfigured (or taken from another source), how does this reconfiguration influence the meaning of the parable in Luke 19:11–27?

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<sup>46</sup> Robbins (1996a:41) defines recitation as “the transmission of speech or narrative, from either oral or written tradition, in the exact words in which the person has received the speech or narrative, or in different words”.

<sup>47</sup> Robbins (1996a:48) contrast recontextualisation with recitation in the following way: “Recontextualization presents wording from biblical texts without explicit statement or implication that the words ‘stand written’ anywhere else”.

#### 4.2.3.2 Historical Intertexture

What may best explain the narrative amplification of the Lukan version of the parable is the historical intertexture to the parable. The parable itself closely follows the historical visit of Archelaus to Rome, in 4 BCE, who sought permission to rule as a client king (van Eck 2011:205). After the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was left to his sons Archelaus, Phillip and Antipas. However, Herod's wish had to be ratified by the Romans. Archelaus travelled to Rome to seek support for his claim from Augustus to rule over Judea as an ethnarch. In response, the Judeans revolted against the possibility of his reign, and sent a delegation to the same emperor to dispute his appointment. The Judeans were concerned with Archelaus' reputation for political violence.

Josephus (*Ant.* 17.9) starts off the narrative by noting that Judeans lamented the manner of death of Judas and Matthias, and that these men were not granted a dignified funeral.<sup>48</sup> As a form of reparation, they demanded political action from Archelaus (*Ant.* 17.9). They requested that the current client high priest (appointed by Herod) should be replaced with another more acceptable candidate. However, this negotiation process escalated to a point of political violence, and the troops of Archelaus killed 3 000 Judeans in the process. This prompted the Judeans to send a delegation of 50 people to object to the appointment of Archelaus. According to Josephus they were joined by 8 000 other Judeans who were living in Rome (*Ant.* 17.11).

The hearing of Archelaus played off in a court scene in the Temple of Apollos. There, a great amount of politicking occurs. The family of Archelaus also gathers together for the occasion, but out of their hatred for Archelaus they do not side with him. Equally, they did not want to appear treacherous before Augustus, and therefore decided not to side with the Judean delegation either. Philip, the brother of Archelaus, is sent by Varus (the legate in Syria), to support Archelaus — but also to be present should Judea be taken away from Archelaus and redistributed among the

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<sup>48</sup> This the same Matthias and Judas that instigated the cutting down of the eagle in Jerusalem and executed by Herod the Great with the other perpetrators (*J.W.* 1.33).

Herodians. The friends of Archelaus argued that the wishes of Herod the Great should be honoured by Augustus, and the appointment of Archelaus ratified, since Herod proved himself to be a worthy client of Augustus. The Judean delegation pleaded for Judea to rather be included under the Roman province of Syria, and be directly ruled by Roman prefects and procurators. This is a stunning political move by the enemies of Archelaus — bearing in mind the severe political consequences when the Hasmoneans appealed to Pompey, and he summarily annexed Jerusalem. Josephus attributes this loss of Judean political freedom on the rivalry between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, and their resultant invitation of Roman oversight (*Ant.* 14.4). The hatred for Archelaus was such that the Judean delegation would rather embrace Roman rule, than submit to his reign.

In the interim, while Archelaus was away from Jerusalem, political violence only increased with several opportunists trying to take advantage of his absence and unpopularity. These included a bandit, called Judas, son of Ezekias; a former body of troops of Herod; Simon, a former servant (or perhaps client) of Herod; Athronges (who was a messianic pretender); and Sabinus (a Roman procurator). Josephus describes the political scenario in Judea as: “there were ten thousand other disorders in Judea, which were like tumults, because a great number put themselves into a warlike posture, either out of hopes of gain to themselves, or out of enmity to the Jews” (*Ant.* 17.10). This forced the hand of Varus, the legate in Syria, who then marched on Judea with troops. This led to several skirmishes, towns being burnt (such as Emmaus), and 2 000 people crucified (*Ant.* 17.10).

In the end Augustus ratified the appointment of Archelaus. Upon his return, he immediately relieved the high priest, Joazar, of this office (on the charge of assisting the sedition in his absence) and appointed another high priest. The political enmity between Archelaus and the Judeans did not diminish after that. According to Josephus, Archelaus treated his citizens “barbarously” (*J.W.* 2.7). This escalated to the point where Augustus banished Archelaus, and placed Judea under direct Roman rule as per the earlier request of the Judean delegation (Crossan 2007:91).

Several connection points exist with the narrative of Archelaus in Josephus, and the parable of the Throne Claimant in Luke: the term for nobleman — ἄνθρωπός τις εὐγενής — links with the question of the Jewish credentials of the Throne Claimant (as did many of the allegations levelled against the Idumean Herodians). The Throne Claimant, like Archelaus, was dependent on the ratification of his rule by a political overlord (as Augustus did in the case of Archelaus). He had many enemies among his citizens and finds himself in the humiliating position of having to face a delegation of his own citizens upon his arrival at his patron. His rule was ratified, despite the efforts of the delegation. Upon his return, he fulfils his reputation of being ἀστυρὸς by removing clients from their offices. Many Judeans died under his brief rule. Furthermore, he expected that Judeans “were to make liberal presents to himself, to his domestics and friends, and to such of his slaves as were vouchsafed the favour of being his tax gatherers” (*Ant.* 17.11). This passage in Josephus seems to suggest that Archelaus, like the Throne Claimant, placed servants (slaves) into positions of power as a reward. It is even possible that they were appointed over geographical areas for the purpose of tax collection (van Eck 2011:210).

Van Eck (2011:201) argues that the correlation between the events around Archelaus, and the parable of the Throne Claimant, is so close because the parable intends to invoke the social memories of this particular incident among the audience of Luke 19:11–27. The parable plays off a well-known, tumultuous and recent historical episode. The parable taps into the emotional world of the audience. Their perceptions on the episode of Archelaus was likely to inform their understanding of the parable. In so doing the intention of Jesus is to comment on the “exploitative normalcies that were an integral of part first century Palestine — elites who on a constant basis were looking for more honor, power and privilege and using their power to exploit” (van Eck 2011:201). But the social memory of the problems that the non-elite peasantry faced at the time of Archelaus, certainly had not changed at the time of hearing the parable of the Throne Claimant. And the reason that it had not changed, was because Judea was caught in an impossible position with Roman imperialism. On the one hand the Romans ratified the rule of an ἀστυρὸς ruler, and that ruler was kept in power because of Roman patronage. On the other hand, the removal of the local client elite ruler (such as the changeover from the Herodians to

Roman procurators) did not remove the social ills that the non-elites faced. The appeal of the Judeans removed a weak Herodian client ruler, but in the process they only managed to jump from the pan into the fire. Now they were under direct rule of the Romans.

#### 4.2.4 INNER TEXTURE OF THE PARABLE OF THE THRONE CLAIMANT

Various repetitive textures and patterns are used in the parable of the Throne Claimant. These repetitive textures and patterns emphasise the political nature of the parable of the Throne Claimant. These include (following the NASB translation): the Kingdom of God (Lk 19:11), nobleman (Lk 19:12), citizens (Lk 19:14), kingdom (Lk 19:12,15) and reign (Lk 19:14, 27). Furthermore, the connection between economy and kingdom is also emphasised: the word “mina” appears 8 times (Lk 19:13,16,18, 24 & 25); and the word “money” appears in Luke 19:23. It begs the question of what sort of political system is envisioned here. What sort of kingdom does the parable envisage? The repetitive textures and patterns illustrate this uncertainty by heightening the contrast between the “kingdom of God” (Lk 19:11) and the “kingdom for himself” (Lk 19:13).

Furthermore, the contrast between master and servant is highlighted by the repetitive phrases in Lk 19:16–17, 18–19 & 20–22. These phrases demonstrate a reverse progression from the most productive client servant to the least. This probably serves as a way of creating suspense, as the audience wonders what the response of the master will be towards the last servant. The use of contrast between the client and patron (as master and servant) also indicates that they are not really friends (as the norm with patronage), but that there was even a greater social distance between the two entities than expected. This distance can be because of class (elite versus non-elite), or even because of political differences (Roman-Herodian versus Judean).

Lastly, the expectations of the Throne Claimant are expressly one of financial profit. According to Josephus, the last order of business for Augustus in ratifying the claims of Archelaus, was to allocate how much tribute should come to Archelaus from his allocated region. According to Josephus, this added up to 600 talents (*Ant.* 17.11). In

Luke 19:11–27 a different monetary unit is used — the mina — which was about a one-sixtieth worth compared to a talent (Garland 2012:760). This is a curious amount when it is considered that the parable in Matthew 25:14–29 uses the talent as a unit. Even within the narrative itself, the Throne Claimant is able to hand out cities, yet he gives his client servants modest amounts of money to do business. Perhaps the use of minas makes the story more relatable to the audience of Jesus. Or perhaps it demonstrates the vast gap between the fate of the political elite (they have talents at their disposal), and the rest in early Roman Palestine (they have to do business with minas).

Either way, the contrasts of words and concepts serve to elevate the contrast between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Throne Claimant. The kingdom of the Throne Claimant is based on greed, and hence exploitation. Therefore, the political system of patronage has been subverted to serve this system of exploitation. It seems that the actual value system of the Throne Claimant's kingdom is embodied in the dictum Jesus provides in Luke 19:27: "I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away" (NRSV).

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

It is argued here that the parable of the Throne Claimant is either reconfigured by Luke from the parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14–29), or taken from another source. The parable of the Throne Claimant invokes the social memory of the audience, by referring to the ratification of Archelaus by Augustus. This elevated the political nature of the parable. The problem with Archelaus was still very relevant to Jesus' audience. The conversion of Zacchaeus, and the anticipation of Jesus going to Jerusalem, caused an undue assumption among his non-elite audience that the injustices and suffering under the current Judean elite system is to cease immediately. Surely the Kingdom of God is coming.

Jesus negates such ideals with the shocking details of the parable. The conversion of Zacchaeus is the exception, not the new rule. For any real political change to take place on a systemic level, the hold of Roman patronage had to change as well. The

problem with Roman patronage was that it created an unsustainable socio-political environment for the Judean non-elite, and it bound the Judean elite in an unsustainable relationship with their Roman and Herodian overlords. Perhaps the central question here is who the various client-servants represent in Luke 19:11–27. Are they clients of the Herodians (and hence the retainer class in Judea), or are they the Herodians themselves? The point of the parable is that the patron will always demand an ever-increasing cycle of profit and honour: such is the nature of an exploitative environment. If the elite clients of the Herodians and Roman procurators are not able to promote the interests of their patrons (as in the case of the high priest Joazar), they will be severely rebuked — or worse. But then no one is to be spared from such system. Not even those with a high social status. This Archelaus discovered at his own cost when he was banished by Augustus. He was found to be the wicked last servant who was unproductive to the emperor. Ironically, the last unfaithful servant may then not represent the Judean peasantry at all, but may be a comment on the dangers of Roman patronage even to the Judean elite. After entering the world of Roman patronage, they themselves will be bound to the precarious threat of having to “do business” for their patrons — or else!

In such a system of imperial bondage, the political ethos of a nation is eroded. This answers the question of § 4.1.2 concerning the moral basis of justice in a particular society. Here, what is considered ἀγαθός in the traditional Israelite understanding of the promised land, and the resultant inalienable right of ownership of land (their own “fig tree and vine”, Mic 4:4); is now diminished to a never-ending competitive environment where more and more power, resources and land is taken — mostly from the non-elite. To try and preserve the community against such profit making, has now become πονηρός. Under such erosion of traditional moral values and social values, the social fabric of whole communities is in immense danger. Unscrupulous clients are the ones promoted by the Roman and Judean elite, while the modest and conscientious clients are removed and rebuked by their αὔστηρός patrons.

Due to the escalating nature of the Roman imperial system, and the subversion of social values that it presented, the irony that the parable alludes to becomes clear:

Roman patronage which sustained the Judean elite, will also destroy it. Jesus enters Jerusalem and weeps over her enemies who would “crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another” (Lk 19:44, NRSV). In the shadows of that terrible prediction the αὐστηρός Romans looms large. In the end, Roman patronage eroded local Judean leadership to the weakness of the last servant. And Judea would be punished for their failure by the αὐστηρός emperor.

This does not mean that Luke decries patronage in general. Such a thought would be tempting in the light of the political expectations in modern democracies, and the scourge of corruption and nepotism. It is highly unlikely that the audience would have entertained such a social upheaval. In fact, Jesus often portrays himself as a broker, and God the Father as patron in Luke (Moxnes 1991:257). Rather it seems the function of the parable is to contrast the political value of αὐστηρός with the political value of humility. The question is not whether patronage should be abandoned in early Roman Palestine, but rather to what end is patronage used. What is the supposed morality behind patronage in a just society? Does it become the political enabling of a system of exploitation, or the ability to serve other sons of Abraham? This topic is one of the strong focal points to be discussed in the Last Supper in Luke (§ 8.6.1):

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, “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, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. “You are those who have stood by me in my trials”.

(Lk 22:24–28, NRSV)

Luke’s critique of the elite Judean and Roman politics was therefore that their perspective of justice was based on αὐστηρός, and exercised with αὐστηρός. For the

elite, the consequences of exercising ἀστηρός did not matter, so long as the system of patronage remained profitable. Power became a means to wealth creation. In contrast to this, Luke portrays the political view of Jesus as humility. Patrons are to be benefactors in the true sense of the word. Power is given as a means of serving people. People, not money, is the true wealth of a nation.

## CHAPTER 5: LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSE AND CULTURE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety”. He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

(Lk 2:46–49, NRSV)

Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, “Let us remove hence”. But, what is still more terrible there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for everyone to make tabernacles to God in the temple, began on a sudden cry aloud, “A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!” This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city.

(Josephus, *J.W.* 6.5)

### 5.1 CULTURAL VALUES AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

As can be gathered from the quotes from Luke and Josephus, the Temple played an integral role in early Roman Palestine. The question is: beyond the central religious role of the Temple, how did the Temple influence social conflict in early Roman

Palestine? It is argued here that the Temple served as a dominant cultural symbol. As a cultural symbol the Temple (and the accompanying social status, priesthood, theology and ideologies) provided a way of legitimising Judean elite policies. The culture of a social group can be defined as the “knowledge, language, values, customs and material objects that are passed on from person to person and from generation to the generation to the next in a human group or society” (Kendall 2016:43). Culture encapsulates, perpetuates, and serves as a focal point for the social values and ideas that drive a particular social group. For culture to function it has to carry over key ideologies from one person to the next, and even one generation to the next. Culture is a vehicle for values and norms. In that sense, the culture of a particular social group — and the symbolic world that encapsulated the particular values of that culture — offers a useful window into the ideologies that shape a particular social group. But culture can also be a problematic category for the researcher, since “culture” remains difficult to define, and is even harder to narrow down in scope.<sup>49</sup>

Malina (1981:11–12) chooses to zone in to a particular element of culture, namely the use of symbols in culture: culture is “a system of symbols relating to and embracing people, things, and events that are socially symbolled. Symboling means filling people, things and events with meaning and value (feeling), making them meaningful in such way that all the members of a given group mutually share, appreciate, and live out that meaning and value in some way”. For Malina, the discussion around culture boils down to the use of symbols. These symbols can be material, non-material or linguistic. But the key question is how these symbols are filled with meaning by a social group, and how do the symbols perpetuate the given meaning for a social group. For the purposes of the dissertation, it would be more productive to examine the larger cultural symbols that defined what it was to be

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<sup>49</sup> This begs the question of why such a slippery category is even included in the dissertation? Although the difficulties are acknowledged throughout, it leaves even a bigger problem by excluding it. In social conflict, a battle of ideologies ensues, revolving around alternate visions of a society. Culture (with its values, norms and symbols) is part of this ideological battle. It is hard to envisage the Exodus without Mount Sinai, the return from Exile without the Second Temple, and the Jesus movement without the Cross (or the Last Supper). By excluding an examination of these cultural symbols and the ideologies they convey, key components of understanding the conflict are neglected.

“Jewish”. Cultural symbols are powerful because they encourage and consolidate social identity<sup>50</sup> — and the social identity in question here goes beyond smaller social groups such as elite and non-elite, or social sects, or even possible regional differences<sup>51</sup> — it is the larger social identity of being Jewish that is in question here. So, although being Jewish was hardly uniform, it can be argued that three cultural symbols shaped Jewish social identity in early Roman Palestine, namely the Torah, the Temple, and Jerusalem itself. These macro symbols were filled with special meaning and value by the Jewish people, and played a special role in defining what it was perceived to be Jewish in early Roman Palestine.

Although the definition of Malina provides a useful focal point for the dissertation, it still does not solve the difficulty around the concept of culture. Since culture offers a broad description of “knowledge, language, values, customs and material objects that are passed on from person to person and from generation to the generation to the next in a human group or society” (Kendall 2016:43), it is equally universal and equally vague. This moves sociologists to divide the concept of culture up into various categories. For Kendall, culture can be divided up into material and non-material culture. Material culture includes “physical and tangible creations that members of society make, use and share” (Kendall 2016:44). Non-material culture “consists of the abstract or intangible human creations of society that influences people’s behaviour” (Kendall 2016:45). It is argued here that the dominant cultural

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<sup>50</sup> The subject of social identity is also closely tied to that of culture. For Lau (2011:26), social identity is the knowledge of an individual that he or she belongs to one or more social groups. Group membership is of emotional significance and is valued by that person. Social identity is the result of an individual’s need to define himself or herself, and to enjoy a positive self-esteem (Hymans 2002:2). Lau (2011:26) defines a social group as an entity where two or more individuals perceive themselves to members of the same social category, and they share a common social identification. This leads to a psychological phenomenon: the self-description of the person becomes linked to the defining characteristics of the social groups the person belongs to.

Furthermore, Hymans (2002:2) states that a person does not have one “personal self”, but that “several selves” respond to widening circles of groups that the person is a member of. In other words, social context (and group) influences a person’s self-perception, as well as the person’s social responses. A key component to social identity is what an individual understands what defines a social group.

<sup>51</sup> Such as possible cultural differences between Judea and Galilee, as well as other Jewish communities in the Roman empire.

symbol in early Roman Palestine was the Temple (§ 5.2). The Temple can be categorised as material culture. However, it is equally argued that, increasingly, the non-elite promoted other cultural symbols to convey their values and ideologies — namely the older covenantal Israelite traditions, such as the Exodus (§ 5.3). This would fall under the different category of non-material culture. So, the categories of Kendall offer a limited heuristic application to the dissertation. Both the elite and non-elite appealed to cultural symbols, but they were not both of material nature.

Rather, the categories of Kidd and Teagle hold more promise. Kidd and Teagle (2012:10) acknowledge the difficulty with defining culture,<sup>52</sup> and then proceed to rather focus on three views of culture. In the first view culture is seen as a system. In this view culture becomes “cement that bonds individuals together. It is made up of shared or collective symbols, and it shapes our lives. It hovers over us, structuring the world around us”. The second view of culture is that it is a “map of meaning” (Kidd & Teagle 2012:11). In this view culture is inside of people. It is shaped by interaction with others. There are still symbols and rules provided to the individual, but there is more active participation. With culture as a system, meaning is assigned to the individual and group through symbols and language. With culture as a map of meaning, individuals assign meaning to the symbols and language. The basis of these categories is a philosophical one: does culture manipulate and shape individuals, or do individuals shape and manipulate culture? The third view of culture is a biological and anthropological use of culture (Kidd & Teagle 2012:13–14). In this view the main issue is one of identity. In the biological view, the individual desires to shape a personal identity, and even extend that identity to the next generation. The interaction with culture is more on a biological level. Here gender identity especially comes to the fore. The anthropological view has been developed beyond the study of cultures in the “developing” world. More recently it has come to focus on various cultures within close confines, as one would find in a city. Again, the issue of identity

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<sup>52</sup> According to Kidd and Teagle (2012:9–10) the concept of culture has become entangled because of an “intricate historical development, in several European languages”. But the main problem is that culture is now applied for various important concept in various intellectual disciplines. It appears the key is not to try and pin down the consensus concerning the definition of culture, but to rather clarify how culture is being applied as a concept in the dissertation.

is relevant, but it is identity of a social group as compared to more dominant social groups. Here the subject of subcultures comes to the fore.

For Kidd and Teagle (2012:128), culture on a larger scale refers to “the way of life” of a larger social group, and this is inclusive of the “values, behaviour, ritual practises, and material goods of the group”. A subculture refers to a group that breaks away from the dominant group and culture. It is a culture within a culture. It has its own norms and values, with its own “way of life”. A subculture is shared by a smaller group of the population. However, a subculture still largely conforms to the broader culture that it finds itself in; it is a unique expression within the larger culture, but still maintains a sense of cohesion with the dominant culture. Lastly, there are deviant subcultures, which are subcultures that largely rejects the dominant cultural norms, and seeks to establish its own norms and values.

In summary, the definitions of Kidd and Teagle centre on meaning and identity. Culture is not necessarily a system of values, norms and symbols placed above and beyond people. This leads to a static view of society, where individuals and social groups are controlled by cultural forces. This is incongruent with the social conflict, and the abundance of theological streams, in early Roman Palestine. Rather, the “map to meaning” view of culture, where values, norms and symbols are filled with meaning by various social groups<sup>53</sup> seems more congruent to the textual sources examined in the dissertation. It also compares well with the definition of Malina (1981:11–12) of culture where symbols are filling “people, things and events” with meaning. These people, things and events can then be shared with others as way to share meaning.

Griswold (2001:262) warns against this view though. Some of the claims made in past research (on the back of culture as a map to meaning) have been too grandiose, and therefore failed empirically. In the second place, there have been

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<sup>53</sup> Examples of social groups in early Roman Palestine are the various sectarian groups (such as the Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees, and the Jesus movement), as well as class groups (such as the elite and non-elite).

many ways to examine culture without making assumption about meaning. Meaning is not a necessary ingredient in order to research culture.

Clearly, culture as a concept has many moving parts, as well as many pit falls. This may force this dissertation to rather just clarify how culture is applied to this particular research question. This may be open to criticism, but will equally avoid the problems in trying to establish a definition that reflects broad consensus. Culture, for the purposes of examining the interaction of social conflict and Lukan prophetic discourse in early Roman Palestine, is approached as a social vehicle for values, norms and ideologies to encourage mobility (of ideologies) and solidarity (of membership) for a particular socio-political vision of early Roman Palestine. There are two components to the vehicle to effectively carry those values, norms and ideologies, namely the a) collectivistic<sup>54</sup> use of symbols which b) shapes social identity. These symbols may be material or non-material. This ties in close with the definition of Malina (1981:11–12): culture is “a system of symbols relating to and embracing people, things, and events that are socially symbolled. Symboling means filling people, things and events with meaning and value (feeling), making them meaningful in such way that all the members of a given group mutually share, appreciate, and live out that meaning and value in some way”.

This definition can be illustrated by the various sectarian groups in early Roman Palestine.<sup>55</sup> Examples of the social sects include the Pharisees, Sadducees and

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<sup>54</sup> The insertion of “collectivistic” is important here. According to Triandis (1993:162), there are four qualities of a collectivistic culture: the definition of self is interdependent; the goals of the in-group are dominant; groups norms are seen as determinant of behaviour; and communal relationships are very important. Collectivism is very applicable to early Roman Palestine which had a strong group identity (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]). The individual (and the perception of the individual of self) was not lost in the process, but played an inferior role to the identity and self-perception of the group. This is what is meant by the definition of self was interdependent: an individual could not really know himself or herself except through a dyadic exchange of knowing oneself through knowledge given by another.

<sup>55</sup> The definition of Baumgarten (1997:7) is preferred for a social sect in early Roman Palestine: “A voluntary association of protest, which utilizes boundary marking mechanisms — the social means of differentiating between insiders and outsiders — to distinguish between its own members and those otherwise normally regarded as belonging to the same national or religious entity. Ancient Jewish sects, accordingly, differentiated between Jews

Essenes. Each of these sectarian groups can be described as subcultural groups. They were unlikely to be deviant subcultural groups, since that they did not reject Judaism as a whole. Rather, they utilised symbols and shaped an identity that tied them together as a smaller subcultural group within the larger culture of early Roman Palestine. They had various sets of cultural behaviour and symbols that could be described as “boundary markers” (Baumgarten 1997:7–11). The aim of boundary markers was to strengthen like values and behaviour within the social sect with visible behavioural codes of cultural, religious or social nature. Boundary markers also served to distinguish the particular social sect from other social groups. Furthermore, each sectarian group had a name which indicated the values and identity that they held.

An example might be the Pharisees. The term “Pharisee” seems to mean “one who is separated”. It is not clear if this separation is from the Roman and Hellenistic culture, or from ritual impurity, or even from other Jewish groups. It might have even been coined as an accusation by the opponents of the Pharisees — they were perceived as “separatist” (Baumgarten 1983:411–413; Cohen 2006:152). The name itself contained a certain self-perception of the group, and the values they held. In other words, a social identity. The Pharisees also utilised symbols, which reflected in

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who were members of their sect and those not”. This meant that Jewish sectarian movements aimed at voluntary involvement of members. Members had to be recruited in some way.

There also needed to be some distinction between members and non-members (or a distinctive compared to other sectarian movements), hence the need for boundary markers. Social sects were usually small, but required some form of organisation with an administrative body, rules of conduct and initiation into the group (Cohen 2006:120). The appeal of such groups in early Roman Palestine was often a religious one, in the sense that such a group tended to claim that it “alone understands the will of God” (Cohen 2006:120). What distinguished a particular social sect from another was a religious claim to truth. However, this religious view on sectarian movements has been challenged to include a broader view that such groups had on politics and other social domains. It is in this sense that social sects are applied in this dissertation. It is further argued that some social sects sought to form communities to live out its ideals, in contrast to the broader community. Examples include the Jesus movement in Acts, and the Essenes with the Qumran community.

their boundary markers. One of the key boundary markers of the Pharisees was their food purity codes.<sup>56</sup>

Food purity codes were religious rituals, but equally they were cultural symbols that were filled with meaning, and conveyed the values and programme of the Pharisees. There is a school of thought that states that the Pharisees attempted to replicate the Temple in the everyday lives of people by means of the food purity codes. This was done in an attempt to ensure the sanctification of Israel, and to make the nation Torah obedient (Deines 2010). This exercise of piety made the Pharisees very influential in the social landscape of early Roman Palestine. And the cultural symbols employed in their boundary markers probably contributed to the mobility of their ideas. This ties into the description of Kendall (2016:142) of reference groups. Reference groups strongly influences “a person’s behaviour and social attitudes, regardless of whether that individual is an actual member”. In so doing, selected symbols influence the self-perception of the group, members of the group, and even outsiders. It can even be argued that their examination of the Jesus movement on the food purity codes in the Gospels was an effort to try and categorise the Jesus movement as a social sect, and to determine whether they were an in-group or out-group compared to their own views.<sup>57</sup> In other words, it was an attempt to determine the social identity of the Jesus movement.

However, it is not within the ambit of the research question to merely explore the differences between various sectarian groups within early Judaism. Rather the

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<sup>56</sup> Examples of the boundary markers of the Pharisees are mentioned in the Gospels. Boundary markers included variation in clothing, such as the length of the fringes on hems and wearing phylacteries (Mt 23:5). There was restriction in the type of foods consumed, as well as purity rules in the preparation of food, and washing before eating or visiting the market (Mk 7:3–4). Other rules were made concerning fasting (Mk 2:18) and tithing (Lk 11:42).

<sup>57</sup> An example of this purity concerns occurs in Luke 11:38, “The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not first wash before dinner” (NRSV). Was the amazement of the Pharisee informed by theological concerns, or was it an expression of indignation informed by boundary concerns? It is likely that it was a reaction informed by both these elements. But the Gospels uses such occasions to indicate that the Jesus movement did not share the theological interpretation of purity rules, nor did they share the boundary markers. They did not see themselves as congruent to the Pharisees.

question is what influenced social conflict between the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine, and how Luke depicts the Jesus movement orientating itself to this conflict. It is likely that culture played a role in the escalation of this particular social conflict, because it was employed as a vehicle for mobility (of ideologies) and solidarity (of members of a class), and because it employed a collectivistic use of symbols to influence social identity. But to derive meaningful answers for the research question, it will have to consider culture on a larger social scale. In other words — for the purpose of the dissertation — Judean culture has to be explored in broader terms: it has to answer what makes a person “Jewish” in general terms in early Roman Palestine. How would one be able to distinguish culturally being Jewish over and against being Roman, or Hellenistic? In other words, what were the macro-symbols that conveyed being Jewish? Which symbols would universally be attached to being “Jewish”?

These questions are important because it allows the dissertation to explore how the elite and non-elite Judean groups appealed to the broader concept of being Jewish to further its social cause, and how these groups clashed in terms of furthering that vision of being Jewish. This is because social conflict entails clashing visions for society as a whole. In other words, it is foreseeable that each of the elite and non-elite groups would appeal to being more fully Jewish than the other group, and was strengthened in its actions since that particular group (both elite and non-elite) believed that they preserved and propagated the larger cause of being Jewish by following their own agenda. As an example, note how the Gospel of John describes the concerns of the elite high priest, Caiaphas, about the Jesus movement:

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all! You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed”. He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God.

(Jn 11:49–52, NRSV)

John 11 intimates that Caiaphas acted on the political threat that the Jesus movement posed to the elite cause. But his apparent motive was to prevent a political disaster. Equally, the Gospels portray the cause and agenda of the non-elite Jesus movement as beneficial to the Jewish nation. So even though the causes and agendas of these two social groups diverged, both appealed to the safeguarding of the Judean nation as a basic driver for their programmes.

## 5.2 THE ROLE OF THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE AS A CULTURAL SYMBOL

It is argued here that in early Roman Palestine, the Temple dominated the religio-cultural symbolic world of Second Temple Judaism.<sup>58</sup> It should come as no surprise that the Temple came to be such a central symbol in early Roman Palestine. It served as a constant reminder of what came to be the core value of Judaism: there is one God, who is worshipped in one Temple, which is to continually abide in one city — Jerusalem. The Temple therefore had an extraordinary unifying religious and cultural effect on the Jewish people. The Temple had this cultural appeal exactly because it was one of the ultimate Jewish symbols, which Jewish people could fill with a mutual and shared meaning. It gave social identity to the Jewish people in early Roman Palestine, as well as diaspora communities beyond Judea. It became a symbol of stability after the fall of the ancient Judean kings, and the following era of changing foreign powers that ruled Jerusalem. The drawing power of the Temple was of such quality, that an estimated 80 000 to 100 000 visitors would be present during some of the Jewish festivals in early Roman Palestine. To put this in perspective: Jerusalem was one of the larger cities in the Roman empire during this time period, and had an estimated 150 000 to 200 000 inhabitants. This meant that during a single festival there could be up to an astounding number of 200 000 people visiting the Temple (Ben-Dov 1986:42).

Of course, the Temple was predominantly sacerdotal in its function, but it transcended this powerful religious function, to have a great influence on the

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<sup>58</sup> Other scholars who support this view include Malina (1981:122–152), Neyrey (1986:91–128) and Wright (1992:224). In their description, the Temple purity system controlled and dominated the social identity as well as the social boundaries of what it meant to be Jewish.

political, economic and cultural domains of early Roman Palestine as well. The cultural dominance of the Temple is illustrated by how the various social sects of Second Temple Judaism vied with one another for the cultural and religious influence that the Temple presented. It can be argued that this was because the powerful cultural status of the Temple served as a potential source of social power for various social groupings. Since the Temple was so central to early Roman Palestine culture, the cultural power of the Temple meant that the shared symbolic meaning and values of the Temple could be appealed to (and laid claim to) by these groups. These appeals could serve to legitimise their various ideologies in the eyes of the broader population. In other words, if a social group could demonstrate how the symbolic world of the Temple supported their particular ideology (how the Temple symbolism and ideology supported their cause and agenda), it would be far more acceptable to the broader Jewish population, and therefore increase their social power and prestige. This would be a form of cultural legitimisation and power to further their cause and agenda (compare with § 4.1.2).

Some of the examples of how the various social sects laid claim to the Temple include:<sup>59</sup> the power of the Sadducees in early Roman Palestine was linked to the impression that their origin harked back to the older priestly lineage. It seems that the term “Sadducee” originated from *Zuduqi*, and could be interpreted as “descendent or adherent of Zadok the priest” (Saldarini 1989:302). The Sadducees were an elite social sect comprising of the elite priestly families, and based their sense of authority and legitimacy on a hereditary claim — they were either in the familial line of Zadok, or they perceived themselves to be the custodians of the legacy of Zadok. As part of the Judean elite, and by claiming to be intimately connected with Zadok, they sought to influence the religious and political landscape of early Roman Palestine. This was likely achieved by influencing the social group

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<sup>59</sup> Examples of how the various sectarian groups appealed to the cultural influence of the Temple is not limited to specific incidents in early Roman Palestine. The only point made with these examples is to illustrate that the Temple served as the pre-eminent cultural symbol in the broader Second Temple period of early Judaism. These illustrations are made by looking at the broad stance of each of the sectarian groups (as well as political entities such as the Herodians and Romans). This conveys a sense of the dominance of the Temple in the social landscape of Second Temple Judaism and includes the time period of early Roman Palestine.

who had historically the mostly control over the Temple — the high priests and chief priestly families. In the narrative of Luke-Acts, this social sect increasingly became the opponents of the Jesus movement, and is depicted as intimately involved with the high priests: “Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy” (Acts 5:17, NRSV). Archaeological findings have uncovered this influence of the Temple on the artefacts of elite houses of the chief priestly families in the Upper City of Jerusalem. Examples include a careful observance of aniconography, with the opulent frescoes and mosaics that decorated walls of their dwellings. The use of stone vessels was to encourage ritual purity when eating, and the use of ritual baths installed in homes enhanced purity for entry to the Temple (Crossan & Reed 2001:244–249; Rousseau & Arav 1995:169–173). The form and application of these artefacts can be traced to the influence of the Temple on the daily lives of the elite.

The Herodians, who are mentioned in the Gospels (e.g. Mk 3:6 and Mt 12:14), were likely to be the Herodian family and their courtiers, officials and retainers (Meier 2000:743). This social group were likely to be very small but very powerful. The Herodians were more politically orientated than religious (as opposed to other social sects such as the Pharisees and Sadducees who seemed to be more religiously inclined), but they understood the importance of the Temple in Jewish life. Here, Herod the Great serves as the archetype. In effect, he controlled the Temple by controlling the appointment of the high priests (Sanders 1992:322). Furthermore, he strove to extend his patronage over the Temple by becoming the patron of the building project on the Temple Mount. He launched an immense building project on the Temple Mount that was ongoing for about 46 years by the time Jesus of Nazareth’s ministry began there (McRay 1991:102). This project followed the template which Herod developed to honour local deities. This honouring of local deities was an attempt to either encourage patronage, or to demonstrate his faithfulness as a Roman client in Gentile areas. These projects included temples to Caesar in Sebaste, Caesarea, and Panias, as well as a temple to the local deity of the Nabateans (Richardson 1996:193). The building project on the Temple Mount came at considerable cost and risk to Herod. The way the Temple Mount was built looked suspiciously like a fortress (and was actually used as such by the Judean rebels in the Jewish War), and could easily arouse suspicions among his Roman

overlords. The project was deemed so sensitive that according to Talmudic legend, Herod proceeded with the project before he got final approval from the Romans (Ben-Dov 1986:42). This was an expression of the sentiment that it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission. But this project of enlarging and improving the Temple Mount would have improved his prestige among his Jewish subjects.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, introduced a novel approach to the Temple. In effect they “democratised” the Temple by exporting the ritual purity codes of the Temple by means of stringent food purity codes. Although they can easily be dismissed as a “food club” (Neusner 1973:146), what they achieved with this approach should not be overlooked. It is possible that the Pharisees developed from the retainer class of the high priests (Saldarini 1989:281–296). As such, they would have been very familiar with the ritual codes necessary for the Temple (as scribes and officials for the high priests and their families). They had no claim to the Temple by virtue of office and political power (Cohen 2006:139), but what they could do was to export the purity code in an adjusted form to the everyday activities of Jewish life (Oakman 2008:252). Whereas the Temple was the centre of worship, the Pharisees extended the influence of the Temple by taking the purity codes of the Temple from its festivals and sacerdotal functions, and replicating it in homes with such adjusted purity laws. The central idea was that purification should not only remain in the Temple, but by enacting it in broader society the whole land could be sanctified (Deines 2010). They proved to be enormously effective in extending these purity codes in the everyday lives of people (Cohen 1996:143; Neusner 1973:146, Williams 1993:29–41). Whereas power came to the Sadducees by virtue of the influence of the chief priests and high priest, and the Herodians by virtue of Roman patronage; the Pharisees built their influence by the support and goodwill of the broader Jewish population. This was crafted on their interpretation of Scripture and Jewish tradition and their application thereof in various purity rule and codes. Their influence among the Jewish people eventually even enabled them to enforce some of their views on the priestly elite (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1).

The Essenes took one step further than the “main-line” Jewish groups and denounced the Temple as impure. Their understanding was that the Hasmonean priesthood was illegitimate, the Temple was therefore polluted, that the Sabbath was

followed incorrectly, and that the wrong calendar was used in the Temple (Cohen 1996:155). This made the Essenes an introversionist social sect. For them, society was hopelessly corrupted because the Temple has been corrupted. This aversion to the broader society led to a monastic and ascetic lifestyle in communities such as found in the Qumran community (Cohen 2006:140,147). In this community, purity codes were enacted which mimicked the community's understanding of the correct purity codes necessary to sanctify the Temple. In so doing, the community awaited an apocalyptic deliverance of the Temple from the impure — so they could resume pure service in the Temple. Again, this illustrates the way in which the Temple loomed large over the cultural and religious landscape of early Roman Palestine.

The Jesus movement recognised the importance of the Temple in equal measure. In the research methodology of Sanders (1985:11), he starts off by compiling a list of historically verifiable (or probable) “facts” about the historical Jesus, before he attempts to approach the Jesus sayings. One of the main starting points for Sanders is that the Temple was the central point of action for Jesus. According to Sanders, Jesus proclaims the destruction of the Temple under the current religio-political leadership. A divine rebuilding of the Temple would occur, and Jesus would rule with the Twelve in Jerusalem under the new dispensation. Regardless of how one interprets the stance of the Jesus movement toward the Temple, the social location of the Temple is portrayed as a core matter to the Jesus movement in the Gospels. The Temple serves as the location where much of the critical concepts of the Jesus movement were formulated. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is introduced there as a holy man with a special relationship with God — according to the narrative he is found as a boy in his Father's house (Lk 2:49). And much of the conflict with the ruling socio-religio-political environment is recorded in the location of the Temple in Luke 19–24: Jesus symbolically purifies the Temple, much of his Lukan discourse is located around the Temple, and in this setting his enmity with the Judean elite escalates to a point of no return.

Lastly, the Romans shrewdly also recognised the importance of the Temple. They had no cultural claim on the Temple, nor did they have any religious influence to shape Temple activities. But they did have military might, and used it effectively to control the politics around the Temple. The best example of this was how the

Romans controlled the proceedings during Passover festivities. The Passover was a religious festival that held a real political threat to Roman power; it celebrated the Exodus narrative and motif as a formative Israelite tradition. The festival emphasised the theological understanding that God would deliver his people from foreign oppression. The Romans addressed this threat in two ways: in the first place, Roman troops were stationed in the Antonia fortress adjacent to the Temple to ensure uneventful proceedings (Williams 2010). But even more insightful was how they kept the high priestly garments in the Roman garrisons — only to be handed over should the crowds be deemed docile enough (Crossan & Reed 2001:241). This was a subtle, yet unmistakable display of Roman power during Passover. In effect, these measures allowed the Jewish people to continue with the religious festival, but ensured control over one of the essential components for the festivals. If the high priest could not follow the prescribed ritual, then celebrating the Passover would be for naught. There could be no mistake in understanding who was really in control. This indicates the importance the Romans allocated to the Temple, and the role that it played in the Jewish cultural landscape.

For the Judean elite, who traditionally controlled the Temple by virtue of chief priestly offices, the influence of the Temple allowed for a cultural legitimisation of their policies.<sup>60</sup> As Elliott (1991:101) describes it: “Temple functionaries and other agencies of the Temple apparatus appear guided by their own self-interests in preserving an exploitative regime in which the mighty remain in their seats and nothing but disdain and neglect is shown those of low degree”. This is to say, the Judean religious and political elite were the same group. By virtue of their office as elite priests they were seen as the *de facto* leaders of the Jewish people. In the words of Borg & Crossan (2009: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]): “The temple replaced Herodian rule as the centre of the local domination system”. This created a platform

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<sup>60</sup> According to Borg and Crossan (2009: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]) dominations systems (such as early Roman Palestine) featured “religious legitimisation”. This means that oppressive political systems were legitimated and justified with religious language. People were indoctrinated to believe that the king rules by divine right. This notion was easily abused to secure the position of the elite, often at the cost of the non-elite. An adjusted argument is used here; namely, that the Judean religious elite was in collusion with their Roman and Herodian patrons, and that they used their social and culture status (as custodians of the Temple) to enforce Roman and Herodian policies. They did not refuse these imperial policies.

of social power for the Judean priestly elite in early Roman Palestine. However, the hard power behind the Judean elite was still Roman patronage (§ 4.1.3). This was likely to create a quandary for the Judean priestly elite. Was the decision making driven by the covenantal traditions of justice in early Roman Palestine, or was it driven by elite concerns and Roman patronage? It is argued in this dissertation that the latter was to be the most likely. This implies that there was some collusion between their power as the sacerdotal custodians of the Temple, and their elite political aims (Freyne 2004:151). And if there was some collusion of their institutional position as elite priests, and their political offices, this meant that they used the cultural power of the Temple to justify and enhance their elite political and economic programme.

That would be tantamount to the abuse of the meaning and values of the Temple, and was decried by some popular non-elite prophets.<sup>61</sup> According to Luke the Jesus movement acted against the way in which the Temple was used by driving the vendors out, and making the statement that the Temple has been defiled to be a “den of robbers” (Lk 19:46, NRSV). Jesus was not merely making an example of a few dishonest vendors with this action. In reality, he was performing a symbolic and prophetic action denouncing the priestly elite. Luke portrays this symbolic action as antagonistic towards the priestly elite by describing their reaction: “Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him” (Lk 19:47, NRSV). In Luke’s mind, the priestly elite clearly understood that this symbolic action was a direct indictment against them.

Even more severely, Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple: “When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, ‘As for these things that you see, the days will come when

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<sup>61</sup> Two examples of non-elite popular prophets who spoke out directly concerning the destruction of the Temple is Jesus, son of Ananius (Josephus, *Ant.* 6.5) and Jesus of Nazareth (Mk 13:2; Mt 24:2; Lk 21:6). But perhaps the most striking example of non-elite fury (against how the Temple was used by the Judean elite to legitimise their policies) is the actions of the Zealots during the Jewish War. The Zealots took control of the Temple vicinity for a short period. They proceeded to execute Ananus, ben Ananus, a high priest. To the shame of the Judean elite, a new high priest was promptly chosen from the Zealots' own non-elite ranks (Goodman 2007:125; VanderKam 2001:43).

not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down” (Lk 21:5–6, NRSV). These verses affirm the cultural centrality of the Temple: it is “adorned” as an object of immense beauty and admiration, and it is “dedicated” to God and therefore a blessing and inspiration to the entire nation. People seemed to admire it, and had great pride in it. But Jesus announced that it was doomed for destruction. The effect on the Jewish psyche of this shattering prediction can hardly be described. The Temple was the stability in an era of changes, and a sure sign that God was with his people. Since the Temple was in Jerusalem, God was at the very least still in their midst. It would have been the most natural reaction to see the Temple as beautiful and blessed. The alternative was too horrifying to consider. But this is exactly what Jesus did. Not only has the Temple been debased to serve economic purposes, but the time of the Temple has now passed.

### **5.3 NON-ELITE CULTURAL ALTERNATIVES TO THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE**

If it can be argued that the Temple dominated the cultural landscape in early Roman Palestine, and that social sects and political groupings attempted to appropriate the cultural power that the Temple offered, then how did the non-elite view the Temple in early Roman Palestine? Certainly, there is an ambivalence towards the Temple in some textual sources (such as the gospel of Luke). This ambivalence is illustrated by how Luke employs an *inclusio* device by making the Temple central to the opening and closing of the Gospel narrative. The Temple is seen as the place of blessing but also of immense conflict and loss. The Temple is the place where Jesus is presented as a child (Lk 2:22–38), where Simeon and Anna blesses him, and where Jesus interacts with religious teachers as a child (Lk 2:42–51). Indeed, the Temple is depicted as the house of Jesus’ Father.

But this portrait of the Temple changes as Jesus proceeds with his ministry. In Lukan narrative, Jesus has a confrontation with the devil at the Temple (Lk 4:9–13); the Temple becomes the place where the repenting sinner (the tax collector) is justified; but also where the hypocritical Pharisee remains while the justified tax collector leaves (Lk 18:9–14). The narrative develops an anticipation of an impending clash between Jesus and the Temple authorities (Lk 9:30–31; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31–34). This conflict becomes a reality when Jesus confronts the Judean elite — with the

Temple as the background scene (Lk 19:45–47; 20:1–22:6; 22:47–23:25). Jesus exposes the erosion of the values of the Temple in becoming merely a den of robbers (Lk 19:46).

If some ambivalence existed among the non-elite in early Roman Palestine concerning the Temple, then what did the non-elite start to elevate as a cultural symbol around which they could rally for their social cause? Here, some examples of the popular (or non-elite) movements in early Roman Palestine present intriguing possibilities. In the works of Josephus, it seems that there were five different popular prophetic movements (other than Jesus of Nazareth) that ministered before the Jewish War in early Roman Palestine. According to the definition of Horsley (1986a:3–27), the social location of these particular prophets can be allocated to the non-elite social group — and therefore they perhaps acted as religious spokespersons for the non-elite. In *Antiquities* 18.4, a prophet described as the “Samaritan” leads people up Mt Gerizim with the promise that they would discover sacred vessels that Moses buried on the mountain. This discovery would cause a new age of restoration. Pilate ordered military action against them, and many of the Samaritan’s followers were slaughtered. Under the procuratorship of Fadus (*Ant.* 20.5), a prophet named Theudas commanded a following by promising that if they should follow him to the river Jordan, he would part the river for them so that they could cross it. Under Felix (*Ant.* 20.8) “imposters and deceivers” lured people to follow them into the wilderness where God would perform wonders and signs — only to be brought back and punished by Felix. This punitive action by Felix did not deter other popular prophets. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.8) recounts a mysterious prophetic figure that he calls the “Egyptian” (also mentioned by Luke in Acts 21:38) who managed to convince a number of the non-elite (a “multitude of the common people”, *Ant.* 20.8) to march around Jerusalem in the hope that the walls would collapse at his command. This sensational promise ended tragically with Felix killing 400 of the Egyptian’s followers. Although the Egyptian escaped, Josephus notes that he “did not appear anymore”. Finally, under Festus, another “imposter” (*Ant.* 20.8) convinced a number of non-elite to follow him into the “wilderness” with promises of “deliverance and freedom”. They, however, managed to elude the forces Festus sent after them.

Not all these movements are explicitly described as “prophetic” by Josephus,<sup>62</sup> but what ties them together is that they all seem to be non-elite (or popular) movements; the movements itself seem to focus on symbolic actions; and these movements continually seem to generate interest and traction among the non-elite in early Roman Palestine. Killing off members of one group, did not stop a subsequent group from acting. More so, the use of symbolic actions by these popular groups is of particular interest to the question how the non-elite slowly transferred their social identity away from the cultural symbolism of the Temple. All the core symbolic actions of these non-elite movements harken back to earlier Israelite traditions that pre-dates the First Temple narratively: the Samaritan referred to the Mosaic tradition and priesthood in order to legitimise the goals of his movement. Theudas referred to the entrance of the Promised Land through the Jordan. The Egyptian referred to the Conquest and the fall of Jericho. And lastly, all the “imposters” referred to the Exodus and the Israelites in the wilderness.

This pattern of symbolic actions — which refer to early Israelite traditions — is also re-enacted in the Gospels by the two dominant popular prophets, namely John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. A few examples would suffice to underscore the point: John preaches in the wilderness of Judea (Mt 3:1), and baptises people (Mt 3:6) in the river Jordan (which refers to the entrance of the Promised Land). He rebukes those who think of themselves as the sons of Abraham (Lk 3:8), and indicates which actions would be of those who are truly sons of Abraham. Jesus himself is baptised by John, and embarks on a preaching programme in which he announces the imminence of the Kingdom of God (as opposed to human kings). He multiplies the bread in the wilderness for his listeners (which invokes the Exodus motif of the manna in the wilderness [Lk 9:10–17]). Blomberg (2005:103) comments on the related passage in Mark 6:30–44: “One cannot help but think of God’s provision of manna in olden times (Ex 16) and the Jewish tradition of the Messiah coming as a new Moses, once again bringing an abundance of bread in the wilderness”.

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<sup>62</sup> Rather the location of these popular movements provided by Horsley (1986a) as popular prophetic movements is followed here.

These early Israelite traditions are important, because they provide a theological framework for covenant (as sons of Abraham), but also provide a powerful cultural symbolism of freedom from oppression. Deeply embedded in these traditions, are the idea that God is on the side of the oppressed. This idea of God being on the side of the oppressed is encapsulated in the “Good News to the Poor” (Lk 4:18). Should this be a correct reading of the praxis and message of popular prophets in early Roman Palestine, it indicates a severe critique of the Temple. This is not to say that the non-elite desired a return to the Israelite traditions that precede the First Temple, but at the very least they demonstrated by these actions that, in popular opinion, the Temple and the priestly elite has lost their way. What the Temple has become under the leadership of the elite is something else than the ideals of the great covenantal traditions and stories of old. The Temple leaders have betrayed the covenantal ideal of freedom and good news to the poor. It has been changed from a house of prayer, into a den of robbers.

#### **5.4 SUMMARY: THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

Although a definition of culture as a social domain remains difficult and disputed, this chapter examines the interaction between social conflict and cultural symbols in early Roman Palestine. The approach taken here is that culture serves as a social vehicle for values, norms and ideologies to encourage mobility (of ideologies) and solidarity (of membership) for a particular socio-political vision of early Roman Palestine. There are two components to the vehicle to effectively carry those values, norms and ideologies, namely the collectivistic use of symbols that shape social identity.

However, to meaningfully derive conclusions concerning the interaction of culture and social conflict, macro-symbols are considered. This is done since social conflict ostensibly started revolving around alternate visions of society as a whole. Each of these visions would lay claim to what it truly meant to be “Jewish”. Here the influence of the Temple is unparalleled in early Roman Palestine. It dominated the social landscape of early Roman Palestine. The cultural influence of the Temple was of such importance that various sectarian groups, the Herodians, and even the Romans

tried to utilise, or at least leverage, its cultural influence to legitimise or strengthen their agenda.

It seems from textual data (such as the Gospels, and Josephus) that non-elite movements started to elevate other cultural symbols to provide mobility (to their ideologies) and solidarity (among their members). These symbols were of a non-material nature, and mostly reflected symbolic actions that echoed the very earliest Israelite traditions. Some of these traditions even preceded the building of the First Temple. These traditional symbols were attractive because they portrayed God acting against the oppressor, in order to free the oppressed.

The Lukan discourse of Luke 21 offers a glimpse into the critique of the Jesus movement of the Temple. In this discourse, the destruction of the Temple is declared. When the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) is applied, the Temple plays an important role in the cultural ideology of the elite. The declaration of the destruction of the Temple undermines the cultural ideology of the elite, and paves the way of another cultural symbol to replace the centrality of the Temple.

## **5.5 THE TEMPLE DISCOURSE AND CULTURE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on". When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down". They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" And he said, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them. "When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow

immediately". Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls. "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written. Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near". Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "Be on guard so that your hearts are not

weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man". Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

(Lk 21, NRSV)

### 5.5.1 THE WIDOW'S OFFERING AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The Lukan discourse of the destruction of the Temple (Lk 21:5–37) is preceded<sup>63</sup> by the narrative about the poor widow's offering. Details that differ in the version of Mark, include the omission of the change of location in the narrative, and the summoning of the disciples to observe the widow (Nolland 1998:978). In contrast, Luke keeps the narrative location firmly in the Temple. The passage of the Widow's Offering has evoked a wide range of exegetical opinions. Broadly speaking, the range of exegetical lines can be summarised as follows: Jesus is pointing out that a gift should be measured by what is left over (not by what is given); an offering is measured by the spirit in which it is given, not by what is given; a true offering is to give everything we have; an offering should correspond to a person's means; and that offering is an important duty (Wright 1982:257–258).

All these exegetical tracks are largely an effort to interpret the comment given by Jesus: "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them..." (Lk 21:3, NRSV). However, it may fail to fully explain the social contrast that Jesus points out in the latter part of the comment "...for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on" (Lk 21:4, NRSV). The concluding part of the verse creates a contrast between the poor,

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<sup>63</sup> The Widow's Offering precedes the discourse on destruction both in Mark and Luke (Mk 12:41–44 & Lk 21:1–4).

powerless non-elite with the rich, powerful elite — and illustrates the social chasm between the elite and non-elite in the Temple itself.

Rather, the Widow's Offering, should be taken as a bridge (or connection) between the conflict of Jesus and the Judean elite (Lk 20:1–21:4); and the discourse on the destruction of the Temple (Lk 21:5–37). In Luke 20:1–21:4, the discourse and narrative has two important foci: in the first place, Luke argues that the authority of Jesus is derived from God, and that Jesus — not the Judean priestly and scribal elite — interprets the will of God for Israel. Furthermore, Luke argues that the priestly and scribal elite does not bear the approval of God, based on their unethical use of the position of the Temple to support their own power and privilege (Green 1997:731).

It is especially in this last focal area, that the story of the Widow's Offering comes to its own right. In this view, the Widow's Offering becomes a further indictment on the behaviour of the Judean priestly elite. It is the nail in the coffin of the priestly elite. In the narrative timeline, Jesus has already declared the Temple “a den of robbers” (Lk 19:46, NRSV). He proceeds to indict the greedy behaviour of the priestly elite: “They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation” (Lk 20:47, NRSV). This is a repetition of the theme of the Temple authorities as a den of robbers. Not only is it said that they devour widow's houses, but then this is observed in practice as the poor widow puts in “all she had to live on” (Lk 21:4). The poor widow loses even the negligible livelihood of “two small copper coins” (Lk 21:4). So, the story of the Widow's Offering, and the indictment of the religious elite (Lk 20:45–47), is linked by Luke by using “widow” in both passages. Furthermore, in Luke 21:1, Jesus “looked up” (ἀναβλέψας, NA<sup>27</sup>) as the discourse on the corruption of the religious elite is completed in Luke 20:47. He sees in action what he spoke against. This emphasises the contrast between the rich religious elite and the poor, and it provides a strong exegetical connection between the two passages (Marshall 1978:751).

The narrative of Luke 21:1–4 thereby creates a contrast between the rich (elite) and poor (non-elite), and their behaviour in the Temple. For Luke, the rich put their gifts into the treasury in public view. This is likely to be done for the sake of gaining

honour (Green 1997:728). This, however, is a cynical exercise, since the Temple system contributed to the wealth of the Jerusalem priestly and political elite. In effect, their offering cost them very little. For them, to give gifts to the Temple is merely a wise investment. They are investing in the very institution that is giving them cultural legitimacy for their extractive economic and political behaviour. Meanwhile the poor (here in the form of the poor widow), loses so much more with their offerings. They may be giving out a sense of duty or piety, but they receive nothing back to alleviate their plight. The Temple has become a den of robbers, and not a house of prayer. The Temple has become a place for the rich, and not for the poor. The comparative state of the poverty of the widow is indicated by the word *πενιχρός* (Lk 21:2). It can be translated as the very poor — in other words the most vulnerable people in an economic sense (Kittel, Bromiley & Friedrich 1964: 40 [vol. 6]).

As Luke 21:5 moves the narrative onto the admiration of the Temple, Jesus himself is moved to a final declaration of the destruction of the Temple. The Temple, for all its religious and theological meaning, for all its cultural and political weight, for all its historical presence and importance, and for all its beauty and appearance — has become merely an obstacle to God. Of all the “gifts dedicated to God” (Lk 21:5), and of all the massive stone constructions nothing will “be left upon another” (Lk 21:6). The beauty and social importance of the Temple should not lull people into a false sense of security.

## 5.5.2 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE DISCOURSE ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

### 5.5.2.1 Challenge-riposte

The prophetic discourse of Luke 21:5–38 is a complicated and difficult passage to exegete. It has been termed both an eschatological discourse (since it deals with the last things of Jerusalem and the world), but also has been described as an apocalyptic discourse (since it complies in places with the apocalyptic genre and

worldview [Fitzmeyer 2008:1323]).<sup>64</sup> The question posed by this dissertation, however, is not the same as the question posed by the Lukan audience — who were interested in “when will this be...and what is the sign” (Lk 21:7). In other words, the question posed in the dissertation is not an examination of Lukan eschatology, and how it compares with other Jewish apocalyptic worldviews and texts, but to understand how this passage relates to Luke’s depiction of social conflict in early Roman Palestine. In this sense, Luke 21:5–38 is then not just linked exegetically to the narrative of the widow’s offering in Luke 21:1–4, but also to Luke 19:45 right up to Luke 21:38 (Bloomquist 1999:177). In this broader pericope (Luke 19:45–21:38), there is a lexical connection with the violent entry of Jesus into the Temple, and the

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<sup>64</sup> The apocalyptic genre and worldview can be hard to describe or define. Collins (1984: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]) makes a distinction between “apocalypse as a literary genre, apocalypticism as a social ideology and apocalyptic eschatology as a set of ideas”.

For Collins, the apocalyptic genre is defined well by Semeia 14 (1979), which is that this is a “genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human being, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar it envisages eschatological salvation, and a spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world”.

Apocalyptic eschatology focuses on the idea that there is a retribution, or application of scales of justice with the *eschaton*.

As a social ideology, there are eight clusters of motifs: apocalypticism has an urgent timeframe; the *eschaton* that might involve a cosmic catastrophe; there is periodization and determinism; angels and demons are involved in human affairs; a new utopia awaits after salvation; there will be a manifestation of the kingdom of God with a mediator with royal status; and glory is a central theological concept.

The definition given by Bloomquist (2002:45), from the Editorial board of the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Series, simplifies the matter somewhat: “Apocalyptic discourse reconfigures our perception of all regions of time and space, in the world and in the body, in the light of the convictions that God will intervene to judge at some time in the future”.

For Wright, the matter the matter of eschatology and apocalypticism, should remain an important topic when studying the Gospels or the historical Jesus. But the eschatological view of the Jesus movement, should also be located within the question of how the Jesus movement fitted into concurrent Jewish eschatological views. For Wright, this removes the eschatological view of the Jesus from an end of the world (brought about by divine agency), to a divine intervention in the world (which aims to bring around societal change). With the former view the world is no more; with the latter view the world continues — but in justice and righteousness. “The reverent periphrasis ‘kingdom of heaven’, so long misunderstood by some Christians to mean ‘a place, namely heaven, where saved souls go to live after death’, meant nothing of the sort in Jesus’ world: it was simply a Jewish way of talking about Israel’s god becoming king. And, when this god became king, the whole world, the world of space and time, would at last be put to rights” (Wright 1996:202–203).

final declaration of the destruction of the Temple. If Luke 21 is to be understood within the larger Lukan context, Luke 19 and 20 play an integral part.

In Luke 20, the central issue is the struggle for religious authority between the Judean elite and Jesus: “Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?” (Lk 20:2, NRSV). The social-cultural format of these exchanges is a challenge-riposte (Green 1997:723). With the social exchange of challenge-riposte, the aim of the challenge was as “a threat to usurp the reputation of another, to deprive another of his reputation. When the person challenged cannot or does not respond to the challenge posed by his equal, he loses his reputation in the eyes of the public” (Robbins 1996a:81).

In Luke 20 various instances of challenge-riposte is given. In Luke 20:1–8 the οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς σὺν τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις (NA<sup>27</sup>) challenge Jesus on the source of the authority of his actions and ministry (Lk 20:2). Per implication, Jesus’ authority is either by divine agency (“heaven”) or human agency (“human”). In Luke 20:20–26 the οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς (Lk 20:19, NA<sup>27</sup>) “sent spies... in order to trap him” (Lk 20:20, NRSV). In this passage, the challenge comes in the form of a comparison between religious authority and political authority. The question is on the basis of the legality of tribute — ought one to submit to political authority (“the emperor”), or to religious authority (“God”). Luke portrays this challenge as an underhanded way to either trap Jesus by speaking out in a subversive way against the Roman political authority, or to lose the religious support of the non-elite by supporting the Roman overlords. Still, the challenge-riposte incident centres around the issue of authority, and the issue of who has supreme authority over the socio-economic landscape of early Roman Palestine.

Lastly, τινες τῶν Σαδδουκαίων (NA<sup>27</sup>) attempts to challenge Jesus with a matter of interpretation of the Torah. An absurd question (Green 1997:717) concerning legalities around marriage and remarriage, is placed in opposition to the resurrection (of which they believed that “there is no resurrection” — Lk 20:27). The challenge is directed on the honour of Jesus as a teacher — the challenge is whether Jesus can skilfully interpret the Torah (“Moses wrote for us” [Lk 20:28, NRSV]). This episode of

challenge-riposte is also centred around the issue of authority — this time on the Torah as a basis of authority.

It is in the context of these three cycles of challenge-riposte, that Jesus “looked up” in the Temple (Lk 21:1), and observed the unjust position of the vulnerable poor among the πλούσιος, and “some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God” (Lk 21:5, NRSV). This prompts Jesus to give the discourse on the destruction of the Temple. The way in which Luke connects these passages, creates a flow from the cycles of challenges — the riposte of Jesus to each challenge, and then finally the declaration of the destruction of the Temple. Luke makes a connection between the challenge-riposte episodes, the declaration of the destruction of the Temple, the eschatological discourse firstly on the fate of Jerusalem, and thereafter the fate of the world. This narrative flow leads to the discourse of Luke 21. And the discourse of Luke 21 settles the cycles of challenge-riposte (in Luke 20) as the final vindication of the authority of Jesus. As Wright (2004:256) explains:

The best way of understanding this passage in Luke is then to see it as the promise that, when the Jerusalem that had opposed his message is finally overthrown, this will be the vindication of Jesus and his people, the sign that he has indeed been enthroned at his Father’s side in heaven (see 20:42–43). Luke does, of course, believe in the ‘second coming’ of Jesus (Acts 1:11), but this passage is not about that. It is about the vindication of Jesus and the rescue of his people from the system that has oppressed them.

Luke presents the ultimate response of Jesus towards the various challenges by the Judean religious elite, not only in his immediate sayings and parables, but in the prediction of the destruction of the Temple. For Luke, Jesus is proved right, and therefore his authority established, because the Temple has fallen. Jesus is correct in his verdict on the political abuse of the Temple, and the destructive impact thereof on early Roman Palestine. This is only intelligible within the view that the Temple

served as a source of legitimisation for the Judean elite, and that thereby they made the Temple a den of robbers.

### **5.5.2.2 Final discourse and kinship**

In the effort to understand the eschatological and apocalyptic view of the Jesus movement, some of the motive behind the discourse itself may also be overlooked. Though the content and imagery of the discourse can be bewildering and concerning, the main drive of the discourse itself is exhortative. For example, Luke 21:9 (NRSV) states: “When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified...”, or Luke 21:18 (NRSV) promises “not a hair of your head will perish”. In the midst of people fainting from fear and foreboding (Lk 21:26), the Jesus followers are encouraged with these words: “Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Lk 21:28, NRSV).

The question is: why does the discourse take on an encouraging tone with material that is potentially discouraging? For Malina and Rohrbaugh (2003:311), this discourse is an example of a social phenomenon called “final discourse” or “farewell speech”. Final discourse is a form of discourse in Mediterranean societies that stems from the importance of kinship. In a final discourse the speaker, when approaching death, is not so much concerned with his or her own life, as the speaker is concerned with the well-being of the person’s actual or fictive kin after death. Malina and Rohrbaugh describe “final discourse” as follows:

However, in Mediterranean antiquity, with the kinship institution being focal, final words will deal with concern for the tear in the social fabric resulting from the dying person’s departure. Hence the dying person will be deeply concerned about what will happen to his/her kin (or fictive kin) group. Before death, the dying person will impart significant information about what is soon to befall the group in general and individuals in the group. This includes who will hold it together (successor), and advice to kin-group members on how to keep the group together. Of course, before passing on, the dying person tries to assure the kin group of its well-being,

offering abiding good wishes and expressing concern for the well-being of the group. It is within this cultural framework that Jesus' final words and actions need to be understood.

(Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:361–362)

Should this be a correct application of the phenomenon of final discourse on the socio-cultural texture of the Luke 21, an important point stands out. Although the discourse is in response to a question of “when will this be” (the fall of the Temple), and “what will the sign be” (of this happening) in Luke 21:7 — the discourse that flows from that question is really more focused on the well-being of the followers of Jesus than answering that line of eschatological questioning. The point of the discourse is to encourage the fictive kin of Jesus. The need for encouragement is even more emphasised by Luke 21:16–17: “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name”. Here the kinship of the Jesus movement takes precedent over actual kinship. For a society steeped in kinship, this is an astounding statement. The fictive kinship of the Jesus followers is stated as pre-eminent above actual kinship (see § 8.3.1.1).

### **5.5.2.3 Summary of the Socio-Cultural Texture**

The socio-cultural texture of the discourse in Luke 21:5–38 reveals two salient points. Firstly, the discourse serves as the ultimate riposte of Jesus. Jesus is vindicated in his authority, and his views on Israel, because the Temple is destroyed. The ultimate cultural symbol of the priestly elite is no more. The irony is evident when the declaration of destruction seems unlikely, in an immediate sense, in the narrative. The Temple is beautiful and glorious; it appears immutable. Yet, not one stone will be left on another.

Secondly, the discourse takes on elements of a farewell address. The vindication of Jesus is not triumphant since his death is imminent. Just as the Temple will be destroyed, so his body will be destroyed. The farewell discourse focuses on the well-being of his fictive kin. Just as he was vindicated, they will be vindicated. But just as he faced the antagonistic Judean elite, they will face antagonists on a global scale.

The larger struggle of the Jesus movement within the ideological space of the Roman empire is envisaged.

### 5.5.3 THE INTERTEXTURE TEXTURE OF THE DISCOURSE ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

#### 5.5.3.1 Oral-Scribal Intertexture

##### 5.5.3.1.1 *The prophetic texts of Jeremiah*

Luke 21:7–38 contains multiple and complex connections with Jewish prophetic and Torah traditions (Bloomquist 1999:186).<sup>65</sup> However, for the purposes of the research question, the most relevant intertexture between Luke 19:45–22:30, and Jewish textual traditions, is the prophetic texts of Jeremiah. The analogies between Jesus and Jeremiah in Luke appears to be intentional (Feinberg 1986:360–361).

In Luke 19:41, the narration notes that Jesus wept over “the city” when he “came near and saw” Jerusalem. This links the Jewish tradition of Jeremiah as the weeping prophet (Jer 9:1). The passages in Jeremiah 7:1–14 and Luke 19:45–46 also correlates remarkably well:

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord”. For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and

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<sup>65</sup> The intertexture textual sources include the Torah and Psalms (Dt 28:64; 32:25,35; Ps 65:8; 46:4; 89:10); the Judean prophetic traditions (Is 24:19; Ez 32:9; Hos 9:7; 13:16; Zech 12:3; Joel 3:3–4; Dan 12:7); Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical texts (*Sir* 28:18; *Pss. Sol.* 17:25; *Tob* 14:5).

if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever. Here you are, trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, “We are safe!”—only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight? You know, I too am watching, says the Lord. Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because you have done all these things, says the Lord, and when I spoke to you persistently, you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your ancestors, just what I did to Shiloh.

(Jer 7:1–14, NRSV)

Luke recontextualises the words of Jeremiah (7:11) that the Temple has become a “den of robbers” (Lk 19:46).<sup>66</sup> As in the case of Jeremiah, the presence of the Temple seemed to have hidden (or legitimised) the injustices done to the powerless in society. The alien, widow and orphan are oppressed (Jer 7:6) — or in Lukan terms, the widow’s house is devoured (Lk 20:47). In both textual cases, the Judean elite are accused of social injustices. They exploit the most vulnerable members of society. Both Jeremiah and Luke protest that the Temple has been co-opted by the elite to become a “den of robbers”. Both Jeremiah 7:1–14 and Luke 21:5 attack the false sense of security of the implied audience/reader. Both warn of a time of reckoning. In Luke 21:1–5 the beauty of the Temple, and the gifts to God that it contained, hid its current status as a den of robbers. In Jeremiah 7:1–14, it seems that some assurances that the Temple belonged to God (Jer 7:4) gave a false sense of security to Judean worshippers.

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<sup>66</sup> Luke 19:46 is a recontextualisation of Jeremiah 7:11, since Luke does not attribute the phrase (“den of robbers”) directly to Jeremiah.

Luke 21:5–38 makes two further important (but less obvious) intertextual connections with the prophetic texts of Jeremiah. Firstly, Luke 21:6 introduces the apocalyptic discourse by the phrase “the days will come” (NRSV), and elaborates on it as the “days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written” (Lk 21:22, NRSV). In Jeremiah 46:10, “the day” is introduced with the following warning: “That day is the day of the Lord God of hosts, a day of retribution, to gain vindication from his foes. The sword shall devour and be sated, and drink its fill of their blood. For the Lord God of hosts holds a sacrifice in the land of the north by the river Euphrates” (NRSV). In both cases, “these days” hold implications beyond Judea — Jeremiah speaks of judgment against the Egyptian superpower, and in Luke the apocalyptic discourse moves beyond Jerusalem to “all who live on the face of the whole earth” (Lk 21:36). In both cases, judgment (or vengeance), is not limited to Jerusalem and the Temple. The Temple becomes indicative of what is wrong with society and the world at large.

Secondly, both Luke and Jeremiah employ the cosmic imagery of the sun, moon and stars. In Luke 21:25 “...there will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves” (NRSV). In Jeremiah 31:35<sup>67</sup> the sun, moon and stars — as well as the waves is given in exactly the same order, but with a different intention. In Jeremiah, the fixed nature of these natural phenomena indicates the firm commitment of God toward the well-being of the “offspring of Israel” (Jer 31:36, NRSV). Yet, in Luke 21, despite the presence of the same natural phenomena of the sun, moon and stars, the nations become “distressed” and “confused” by the roaring of the “sea and the waves” (NRSV). The sun, moon, stars and waves are not comforting signs anymore. They do not indicate stability and continuity. Rather they take on ominous qualities. Luke 21:25 is therefore a reconfiguration of Jeremiah 31:35. In Jeremiah, the cosmic stability of the natural phenomena of the sun, moon and stars, assures the anxious audience of the peace of Judea in troubled times. Luke subverts this — none of the

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<sup>67</sup> “Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the Lord of hosts is his name: If this fixed order were ever to cease from my presence, says the Lord, then also the offspring of Israel would cease to be a nation before me forever” (Jer 31:35–36, NRSV).

audience should rest in a false sense of security. “No stone will be left on upon another...” (Lk 21:6, NRSV).

If Judean society, and indeed the rest of the world, is heading for days of upheaval and vengeance, it implies that there will be a change of the order in society. If the Temple is heading for destruction, then what will replace the Temple as a religious, cultural, political and economic centre? On the surface Jeremiah and Luke provide different answers.<sup>68</sup> In Jeremiah 31, a promise is made of a new covenant after judgement. “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah” (Jer 31:31, NRSV). This covenant is not like the covenant of Moses (Jer 31:32), but will somehow be “my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer 31:33, NRSV). Luke 21:36, reconfigures the “Son of Man” of Dan 2:13. As in Daniel, Luke’s understanding of this Son of Man is linked to the Kingdom of God.<sup>69</sup> The phrase, however, is developed further in Luke. When the upheaval is done, everyone should pray to “have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Lk 21:36, NRSV). The Son of Man moves beyond the Daniel picture of royalty (Dan 2:14), and also becomes a judge who enacts judgement. On the surface, Luke and Jeremiah end in different places.

However, the intertextual connection with Jeremiah 31 continues in Luke 22. In Luke 22, Jesus commences with the Last Supper as a replacement of the Passover meal (Lk 21:8). The Last Supper reflects the ideal of the new covenant of Jeremiah: “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Lk 22:20, NRSV).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Of course, Jeremiah and Luke focused on the destruction of different Temples. Jeremiah spoke of the destruction of the First Temple, and Luke the destruction of the Second Temple. The point made here (by means of the common elements like “the day” and cosmic phenomena) is that the intertextual connection between Jeremiah and Luke, allows for a template of sorts. If Jeremiah foresaw a change of order, then the replacement was the “new covenant”. Luke follows the same line of reasoning towards the Last Supper (the “new covenant” in Luke).

<sup>69</sup> “So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near” (Luke 21:31, NRSV).

<sup>70</sup> The “kingdom of God” is the common denominator between the “Son of Man” (Lk 21:36), and the Last Supper (Lk 22:16). A further connection between the Son of Man, and the Last

This raises a key issue in this chapter. The declaration of the destruction of the Temple makes way for a new way of finding social cohesion and vision. A new order is envisaged. If the Temple in the time of Jeremiah was unable to provide social justice, then a new covenant was to provide such a theological and political vision. This link between religious renewal and political restoration is indicated by how Jeremiah 31:38–40 follows on the promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31–37: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when the city shall be rebuilt for the Lord from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate” (Jer 31:38, NRSV). It is argued here that Luke 22 follows the same pattern — after the declaration of destruction in Luke 21, a new vision is given with the Last Supper in Luke 22 to replace the function of the Temple in social cohesion (§ 8).

#### 5.5.3.1.2 *The apologetic texts of Josephus*

Josephus also seem to generally follow the line taken by Luke in the description of the fate of the Temple. Like Luke, he makes much of the beauty and adornment of the Temple, and the overwhelming effect it had on onlookers. “Accordingly, in the fifteenth year of his reign, Herod rebuilt the temple, and encompassed a piece of land about it with a wall; which land was twice as large as that before enclosed. The expenses he laid out upon it were vastly large also, and the riches about it were unspeakable” (*J.W.* 1.21).

Furthermore, like Luke, he links the sacking of the Second Temple with the prophetic texts of Jeremiah. The way in which he connects Jeremiah and the sacking of the Second Temple, is by linking the day of the sacking of the First Temple, with the sacking by the Romans of the Second Temple: “but, as for that house, God had for certain long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous [Ab], upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon” (*J.W.* 6.4).

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Supper, is perhaps made by the promise of Jesus to abstain from the meal “until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God” (Lk 22:16,18). Should this be the case, then both the use of the term “Son of Man”, and the discourse on the Kingdom during Last Supper indicate the future realisation of the kingdom of God.

Significantly Josephus, like Luke, also employ celestial signs as a portent of the destruction of the Temple (*J.W.* 6.5):

Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend, nor give credit, to the signs that were so evident and did so plainly foretell their future desolation; but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see, or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also, before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan], and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now, those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it: who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty, was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared, that this signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon them. Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the twenty-first day of the month Artemisius [Jyar], a certain prodigious and

incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner [court of the] temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "Let us remove hence".

Though the nature and details of the signs employed by Josephus are different from Luke, both indicate a cosmic upheaval that accompanied the fall of the Temple. But here the resemblance ends. For Luke, the fall of the Temple is inevitable due to the unjust nature of it as a den of robbers. It is an indictment against the elite who abuse their privilege and use the Temple for their own gain. For Josephus, the Temple is left defenceless due to the gullible non-elite who are willing to follow "deceivers, and such who belied God himself". For Josephus, the gullible misinterpreted the signs and followed populist prophets, and thereby lost the opportunity to understand the signs and time wisely. This would have enabled them to prevent the destruction of Jerusalem, since they would have plotted a better political course than defying the house of Vespasian. What this indicates, is that the fall of the Temple was far more than merely a massive blow to the national and religious Judean psyche. The fall of the Temple is also an ideological issue. For Josephus the ideological issue was to promote the patronage of the Flavians as guardian for the Jewish people (Huntsman 1997:397), for Luke the ideological issue was the spread of the Jesus movement beyond the borders of early Roman Palestine to the larger Roman empire.

### **5.5.3.2 Summary of the Intertexture Texture**

The link with the prophetic traditions of Jeremiah runs throughout the discourse. Just as Jeremiah was vindicated by the destruction of the First Temple, so Jesus is vindicated by destruction of the Second Temple. However, the destruction of the Temple leaves a cultural, religious, and political vacuum. What will replace the old

order? In the prophetic traditions of Jeremiah, a new covenant will replace the old one. It is argued here that, by means of the intertexture of Luke 21 and the traditions of Jeremiah, anticipation is built for Luke 22:7–38 to provide similar answers. If Jeremiah offered a new covenant, then what does the Jesus movement offer? It is argued here (and will be discussed in § 8), that Luke promoted the Last Supper as a cultural symbol among the Jesus movement. The discourse in Luke 22:14–38 develops the meaning of the cultural symbol of the Last Supper.

#### 5.5.4 THE IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE OF THE DISCOURSE ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

With the ideological texture, the text itself becomes secondary to the “biases, opinions, preferences and stereotypes” of the parties that have a conversation around the text. The text becomes a platform for this discussion between various parties of readers (Robbins 1996a:95). Robbins proceeds to use the definition of Davis to define ideology, namely that an ideology is “an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions, and values that reflects the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history” (Robbins 1996a:96).

These factors explain the difficulty, but also the importance of the ideological texture to the exegete. For the exegete to remove himself or herself from the text, and to be inserted into the dialogue between the various ideologies of possible readers of the text, puts the exegete on a distinctly less firm ground. Not only is interpretation of the text then necessary, but also the exegesis of various possible ideologies. This potentially puts the exegete into a quagmire of opinions and subjective views. However, avoiding the ideological texture also creates problems. By simply reading the text, ideologies of the actual reader are already invoked by the text, and the attentive reader is forced to have a dialogue with the text concerning applicable ideologies. This is the aim of the implied author after all, namely to have a persuasive conversation with the implied reader to convey his or her ideologies to the actual reader. Luke 21 is a passage that strongly appeals to the ideology of the implied reader.

For Robbins (1996b:21) the distinction between actual and implied author (and actual and implied reader), lies in the difference between the external world of both the author and reader (the actual) and the inner world of the text (the implied). In order to convey ideology, the actual author extends himself or herself through the text. This extension of the actual author is done by means of language, and the use of language helps the actual reader to compile a composite (or portrait) of the author. This portrait is the implied author. The implied author “can be known through manifestations of their expressions in texts” (Robbins 1996b:21). Equally, the implied author then speaks to an idealised (and intended) reader within the inner world of the text. This is the implied reader. The implied reader “designates the reader the text implies” (Robbins 1996b:22). The implied reader receives the communication of the intended ideology in the text. The function of the implied reader is to serve as interpreter of the intended ideology (or message) to the actual reader.<sup>71</sup>

The destruction of the Temple (which was at the time of the writing of Luke, or shortly before the writing of the text [§ 1.4.1.1]), leaves the implied reader in an ideological state of flux. The question, of course, is what the profile of the implied reader is? If the implied reader was from a Jewish community, then for that reader there was the cognitive dissonance of trying to re-orientate his or her theological views after the fall of the Temple. If the implied reader was a Roman and Greek God-follower, then for that reader there was the issue of the supremacy of the Roman empire — and how the military superiority of the Roman war machine fitted into the ideological views of the Jesus movement. If the implied reader was from early Christian communities, then for that reader there was the ideological question of a differentiation from, but also unity with, early Judaism. Furthermore, for the implied readers of the early Christian communities, the destruction of the Temple

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<sup>71</sup> The distinction between actual and implied reader is “human-made boundaries for the purpose of focusing analysis on a text” (Robbins 1996b:22). In other words, it is a construct. The only reader that assigns meaning to the text is the actual reader (Phillips 2009:18). In that sense, Phillips warns that the real distinction should also be made between reader and reading. Reading is the interpretative strategy of the actual reader, in an effort to assign meaning to the text. This makes the boundary between actual and implied reader artificial. Nevertheless, implied reader is a useful designation as an object for the ideological aims of the implied author, because it provides a focal point of discussion — even if, in the process, it reveals more about the reading strategy of the actual reader, than the ideology of the implied author.

vindicated views of Jesus and the ideologies of the Jesus movement, but they were still facing a dominant Roman empire — and had to either reconcile with, or try to subvert, the dominant Roman imperial ideology. There was also the ideological issue of how they defined (or rethought) the Jewish nature of the Jesus movement in the face of this cataclysmic event.<sup>72</sup>

#### 5.5.4.1 Ideology in the Social and Cultural Sphere of the Implied Author

In order to establish an ideological reading of Luke 21, the stance of Luke on the Roman empire becomes pertinent. The formulation of Luke's stance towards the Roman empire is disputed, and demands a deeper discussion than what this dissertation allows for.<sup>73</sup> Whatever the view taken on the political stance of Luke, it is hard to deny that the apocalyptic discourse of Luke 21 resembles a situation that

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<sup>72</sup> This hypothetical concerns for various possible implied readers indicate the difficulty in determining the portrait of the implied reader in Luke. According to Kurz (1993:13-14), textual evidence leans towards Christian readers from a Greco-Roman environment. There are fewer Jewish preoccupations in Luke-Acts than in the other Synoptic Gospels, and an outreach to Gentiles is accentuated. Furthermore, the use of allusions to the Septuagint, indicate a strong grasp of such texts by the implied reader. The implied reader is unlikely to be a non-Christian Roman. Therefore, the ideological texture proceeds with the profile of the implied reader as a Christian in the Greco-Roman world. For such a reader, the overwhelming concern would be the possible antagonism between imperial and Christian ideologies, and to a lesser extent, the distinctive between Judaism and the Jesus movement.

<sup>73</sup> Walton (2002:2) summarises the spectrum of views on the stance of Luke toward Rome of the last century as follows: Luke-Acts is a political apology on behalf of the church toward Roman officials (the early church/Jesus movement is innocent); Luke-Acts is an apology on behalf of the Roman church towards the broader church (Rome is innocent); Luke-Acts is giving legitimisation for the identity of the church; Acts is helping the church on how to exist alongside Rome; Luke-Acts is apathetic to politics.

Walton then proceeds to propose the following view on the stance of Luke-Acts towards Rome (2002:34–35): Luke writes purposefully concerning the Roman empire. His view on the stance of Christian communities is nuanced — where possible it is commendable to live in peace with the empire. However, he leaves no place for a romantic view on the empire; the persecution of Jesus and Paul holds a distinct possibility of becoming the fate of other Jesus followers as well.

The message of Jesus remains deeply subversive of the notion of justice and the use of power in the Roman empire. Lastly, Luke affirms the supremacy Jesus over Caesar. This encourages a critical stance towards the empire, and an encouragement to remain faithful to Jesus — but also presents a stark choice when Jesus followers are presented with a choice between allegiance to Caesar or to God. This dissertation follows this view in broad terms.

reflect a crisis mode.<sup>74</sup> This crisis mode had political dimensions and implications. The political effect of the crisis mode can be observed with two effects it had on the early Christian community. In a more immediate sense, it implied a command to the early Jerusalem church to flee from the city: “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfilment of all that is written” (Lk 21:20–22, NRSV). Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.5) records a tradition that the early Jerusalem church did exactly that, and relocated to Pella before the Jewish War as a response to an oracle.

But beyond the destruction of the Temple, and the sacking of Jerusalem, the crisis moved the focus of the early Christian communities away from early Roman Palestine (and the Judean elite) to the broader world of the first century Roman empire. They had to decide whether the essence of the message of the Jesus movement was congruent, or subversive, to the broader Roman empire. It opened the possibility of persecution from the Romans. This is perhaps reflected in Luke 21 when the question of “when” and “what” after the declaration of the destruction of the Temple (Lk 21:7), is not answered at all. Rather the discourse moves from the fall of the city of Jerusalem itself, and takes on cosmic dimensions as it focuses on the “face of the whole earth” (Lk 21:35). The discourse not only vindicates the authority of Jesus as he denounces the Temple elite, but it also foresees a greater struggle against the Roman empire for its implied readers. In Luke 21, this struggle holds grave possibilities of persecution as “nation rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Lk 21:10). “But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name” (Lk 21:12, NRSV). Even worse, it holds the possibility of betrayal even by actual kin: “But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and

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<sup>74</sup> Compare the comment made by Theissen (2004:125) on Mark 13 — which is the Markan account of the apocalyptic discourse of Jesus. “The discourse reflects crisis conditions” based on a possible background of persecution of Christians as background, or the flight of the early Christian community from Jerusalem as a background, or possible threat of a desecrating desolation as a background to the discourse in Mark 13.

prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name” (Lk 21:12, NRSV). This mirrors the abject desolation of Jesus, abandoned by actual and fictive kin with his trial (Lk 22:54–62).

For the implied reader, Luke 21 forewarns and encourages in the midst of possible persecution. And just as Jesus was vindicated in the destruction of the Temple, so the Son of Man will be vindicated on a cosmic scale when all will have “to stand before the Son of Man” (Lk 21:36, NRSV). This places the early Christian communities on a direct collision course with the Roman empire. The Temple elite, already symbolically destroyed by the cleansing of the Temple, now makes way for a struggle on a larger scale. This scale involves “the world” (Lk 21:26), “heavenly bodies” (Lk 21:26), and the “whole earth” (Lk 21:35). The scale takes on “cosmic-apocalyptic descriptions” (Stein 1992:524). Not only does the scale of the impact of the events involve the Roman empire, but so does the description: in the Lukan account Jesus is elevated to the Son of Man (of Daniel 7). What is significant is the description of the glory of the Son of Man. The Son of Man takes on divine elements. Marshall (1978:776) describes this as follows:

Clouds may be a means of heavenly transport, but ‘cloud’ (sing.) is an indication of the divine presence or rather of the glory which is associated with God and hides him from men; Luke’s change here suggests that he is thinking of the Son of man accompanied by the glory of God (as the next part of the verse makes clear); there are links with 9:34f. and also with Acts 1:9 where Jesus ascends into a cloud, and it is prophesied that he will return in the same way (Acts 1:11).

Not only does the scope of the impact of the Son of Man compete with the Roman emperors, but so does the divine status of the Son of Man also compete with the Augustan ideology of being favoured by the gods.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the Augustan ideology elevates the emperors to divine status with cosmic signs and symbols. A famous example is how the *Sidus Iulium* (a comet) appeared during the funeral games for

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<sup>75</sup> *Augustus* (Latin) or *Sebastos* (Greek) imply the meaning of divine favour from God (Diehl 2011:10).

Caesar in 44 BCE. This sign was interpreted to mean that the gods received Julius Caesar among their ranks as a *divi filius*. This opened the road for Augustus also to be deified in 14 CE, and inspired various poetic literature (such as Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 15) and the usage of the image of the *Sidus Iulium* on coins to propagate the cosmic ideological dimensions of the Augustan emperors (Pandey 2013:405,449).

Regardless of the eschatological views of an actual modern reader, for an implied first century reader, the Roman elite and emperors loom large in contrast to the Son of Man. For the early Christian communities, this probably implied not only a vindication of Jesus in his indictment of the Temple (the Temple is destroyed), but encourages a future indictment against the empire (the Son of Man will appear). As Jesus was vindicated in the former, so Jesus will be vindicated in the latter. This serves as an important bridge leading to the aims of Acts — which follows the narrative of the Jesus followers from Jerusalem to Rome.

For Bloomquist (1999:204–205) the symbolism and apocalyptic rhetoric of Luke 21 indicate the central role of political violence that spread from Rome to Jerusalem. This violence ironically became formative to the Jesus movement as it spread from Jerusalem (Luke) back to Rome (Acts). In this sense, the prophetic discourse of Luke 21 subverts the Augustan imperial rhetoric. This imperial rhetoric sees Roman power spreading out from the centre of Rome to the outer expanses of the world through military conquest, followed in quick succession by Roman business and Roman agriculture. But this wave of conquest that floods Jerusalem and the Temple, is used by the Jesus movement to move back from Jerusalem to Rome. The violence of Roman conquest, becomes the vehicle of the Gospel that reaches and subverts Rome.

For Seo (2015:124), Luke places the Jesus movement on a path of cultural assimilation, but equally depicts the Jesus movement establishing a contra-culture to the Augustan ideology. The main premise of the Augustan ideology was that the emperor followed a three-step programme of victory-peace-salvation. Military victory ensured the ability to spread peace to a region through Roman justice, and therefore the benefaction of the emperor “saved” the inhabitants from their societal and

economic troubles. Seo views the Lukan ideology of Jesus following the same steps as the Augustan ideology (in line with cultural assimilation). Here Luke 21 serves as an example of the three step Augustan process: the Son of Man appears victoriously with “power and glory” in the midst of “fear and foreboding of what is coming on the world” (Lk 21:26–27). This Son of Man institutes peace by what seems to be a form of judgment (“stand before the Son of Man” [Lk 21:36]). Finally, this brings salvation or “redemption” (Lk 21:28). This does not mean that the way in which the Son of Man brings about salvation is the same as the Augustan ideology.<sup>76</sup> There is a Lukan ideological contrast between the emperors and Jesus. But the main ideological point for an implied first century reader of Luke 21, is that just as Jesus was vindicated in his prediction of the destruction of the Temple, so the people will be vindicated by the Son of Man once “Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Lk 21:24, NRSV).

Key to this Lukan apocalyptic discourse is the ideology of power. Who has the Kingdom and who has the power? Is it Christ, or is it Caesar? But it also gives a glimpse of how Luke chose to portray the subversive ideology of the Jesus movement, without appearing as a political threat to the Roman empire. This fine balancing act is further developed in Acts. On the one hand, Luke conceded the accusation of the enemies of the Jesus movement in Thessalonica: “When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, ‘These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus’” (Acts 17:6–7, NRSV). The implications of the accusations are that the Jesus movement is politically subversive — and that they indeed seek to alter the Roman empire and proclaim Jesus as a higher authority than the emperor. But equally, Luke argues that the main proponents of the Gospel and of Acts (Jesus and Paul) is innocent. For the implied reader, it becomes clear that they are politically subversive

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<sup>76</sup> For example, “victory” Luke’s understanding does not include militarisation as in the case of the Romans. Victory does not come through military action *per se*. Here is discourse on loving your enemy (Lk 6:27–38) and Jesus’ rejection of using the sword (Lk 22:35–38) comes to the fore.

(but not violent), and yet Luke pictures them as just (Rowe 2009:92). This might seem like a contrary position; yet it was the fine and nuanced political line that the Jesus followers walked in the Roman empire.

#### **5.5.4.2 Summary of the Ideological Texture**

The vindication of Jesus with the destruction of the Temple does not leave the Jesus movement in a triumphalist position; rather, the smaller conflict with the Judean elite, now shifts to a coming conflict with Roman power and Roman ideology. More importantly, just as Jesus was vindicated, they will be vindicated when they stand before the Son of Man: “Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Lk 21:28, NRSV). Just as the ideological clash of the Jesus movement and the Judean served as a catalyst for the growth of the Jesus movement, so the ideological clash with the Romans will spread the message of Jesus to Rome.

### **5.6 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the Lukan narrative moves from the declaration of the Temple as corrupt in Luke 19:46, the symbolic cleansing of the Temple, to a final declaration of the destruction of the Temple in Luke 21:5. Here Luke depicts Jesus in the tradition of Jeremiah, who also decried the practices of the Judean elite — and reluctantly declared the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. In the actual destruction of the Temple, the authority of Jesus as an authoritative spokesperson for God is vindicated, just as it was in the case of Jeremiah. But as in the case of Jeremiah, the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem created the awareness about two great issues: the theological issue of what the old “order” should be replaced with if it proved to be corrupt beyond redemption, and the political issue of how the people of God should be safeguarded when the “Gentiles” trample on Jerusalem.

The first question is encapsulated by what replaced the Temple among the Jesus followers as the pre-eminent cultural symbol. The apparent answer of other popular prophetic movements (in early Roman Palestine) was that earlier Israelite traditions were symbolically revived through re-enactment. Here a clue is partly given

pertaining to the tradition championed by the Jesus movement in Luke. This alternative and earlier tradition has something to do with kinship. The issue of actual and fictive kinship features heavily in Luke 21:5–38 as a concern of Jesus. As in the case of Jeremiah, a new covenant is prefigured by Luke. This new covenant becomes the feature of Luke 22:1–38. This new covenant is likely to be centred on kinship, should the elements of final discourse in Luke 22 be taken as an indication. This emphasis on kinship provides a foil against the impersonal abuse of the authority of the Temple.

The gaze of Luke then goes beyond the conflict between the Judean elite and Jesus in Jerusalem. For Luke, the table is set for an ideological struggle on a larger scale between the divine Son of Man and the divine Augustan emperors. In this sense, Luke 21 prefigures the narrative of Acts, and the account of the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. With these precursors in mind, the narrative moves on to the discourse around the Last Supper in Luke 22, which may very well contain the cultural alternative to the Temple given by the Jesus movement; as well as the ideological impetus necessary to endure the power onslaught of the “Gentiles” (§8).

## CHAPTER 6: LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSE AND ECONOMICS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king”.

(Lk 23:2, NRSV)

...but the Jews, although at the beginning they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did they leave off any farther opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazar, who was the son of Boethus, and high priest. So they, being over-persuaded by Joazar’s words, gave an account of their estates, without any dispute about it; yet there was one Judas, a Gaulonite, of a city whose name was Gamala, who, taking with him Sadduc, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt, who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty.

(Josephus, *Ant.*18.1)

### 6.1 THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The economy of a country can be defined as the way “society chooses to allocate its scarce resources to the production of goods and services in order to satisfy unlimited want” (Tucker 2009:5). This definition of economics alludes to the difficulty society faces with “unlimited want”. Resources will never be enough to meet the perceived need of all of society. It poses the questions that if resources should be scarce, whose wants are satisfied; to what level are they satisfied; and who makes the decisions concerning the allocation of resources to satisfy those wants? Boer (2015: Chapter 6 [Kindle edition]) argues that since agrarian economies (of which early Roman Palestine was an example) struggled to produce enough resources, Israel was always in a mode of either crisis or collapse. “Crisis” implies that the non-elite lived in a state of high scarcity, and was therefore always vulnerable to environmental or political instability. “Collapse” was when the lack of resources escalated to the point where it even influenced the elite’s quality of life (as in the

case of the Jewish War). Often historians take note of occurrences of collapse, mainly because the elite textual sources highlight it (Josephus serves as a prime example). But this does not mean that the non-elite lived a comfortable lifestyle in between those events of collapse. They lived in a perpetual state of crisis. Rather, Boer argues that the non-elite found collapse a time of relative political liberty, since elite institutions of control could not function in such times. It reminds of how the political impact of the extreme non-elite group, the Zealots, came to the fore in Jerusalem during the Jewish War (Horsley 1986b:159–192). As the introductory quotes of Luke and Josephus suggests, taxation and tribute remained a political flash point in early Roman Palestine.

Two competitive theories have been applied as a description of the prevalent economic system in early Roman Palestine, the primitivist model and the modernising model (Harland 2002:516). According to the primitivist theory, the economic system in early Roman Palestine had a strong extractive and centralising element — where the needs of the elite was met by syphoning off resources from the non-elite. For this model to work, a large number of the non-elite had to pay taxes to support the needs of the low number of elites. This was due to the relatively low subsistence economic productivity of the peasantry. Their income was very low — and therefore a large number of peasants had to pay the required total taxes to supply sufficient resources for the elite. The small surplus generated by the subsistence farming was constantly under threat by these extractive policies (which included taxation, tribute, debt, and tenancy). This meant that the very survival of the peasantry was tenuous at best — and added economic burdens, such as military campaigns and drought, would cause them to forego their land holdings. And since early Roman Palestine was an agricultural economy, access to land was access to the economy itself. In this model, a flow of resources came from the peasantry in rural areas towards the elite urban areas. Here the elite controlled the economic resources with their political power; little to no mechanisms, or the inclination existed for redistribution of resources toward the rural and peasantry areas.

In contrast, the modernising theory postulates that early Roman Palestine (and other Mediterranean countries) functioned much like a modern economy where trade and commerce encourages the distribution and redistribution of resources (Harland

2002:517). The difference was only in scale and quality of trade compared to modern economies. In this model, the view of the elite urban areas becomes more positive than the primitivist model. It made the elite urban areas more akin to trade partners with the non-elite rural areas (as opposed to the urban elite acting parasitical upon the non-elite rural areas).

There is no real consensus as to which of the two models reflect the historical reality best. But despite the model preferred, it seems that at the very least resources flowed centrally towards the elite urban areas, and that the elite controlled and benefitted from these resources. Here the economic role of the Temple, and the financial connection between the Jerusalem elite and the Temple, becomes illuminating. In the first place, the Temple, in line with other temples in Antiquity, became a place of storage for capital (Oakman 2012:86). The Temple proved to be a constant temptation to the Roman governors — who several times seized (or at least attempted to seize) this capital to fund their various public works (Goodman 1987:53). This was only a danger if the capital stored in the Temple accrued to large amounts, was centralised, and was not redistributed to the non-elite rural areas. Also, the total capital accrued became so large that (according to Josephus) the sacking of the Temple at the end of the Jewish War led to the gold price being halved in Syria, since the market became flooded with gold (*J.W.* 6.6). The size of this war chest is an illustration of how Judean capital remained centrally stored and used.

In the second place, the flow of capital towards the Temple also meant that it became a generator of commerce in early Roman Palestine. To be fair, the Temple provided a welcomed source of employment for labourers with the immense public works on the Temple Mount. Josephus estimated that about 18 000 labourers had to be employed, housed and fed over a few decades to complete the work (*Ant.* 20.9). But it is unlikely that these labourers derived any enduring financial benefits from the Temple works. Rather the Jerusalem elite, who were housed in the Upper City of Jerusalem, became rich. These riches were possibly due to the flow of resources into Jerusalem, and the commerce that the Temple and capital city generated. Should the primitivist view of the economy in early Roman Palestine be correct, the point is that in an extractive economy the rich always increase in wealth, even in the

employment of the poor. In the process, some elite also became overtly corrupt. In the Babylonian Talmud (*Peshahim* 57a) one of the elite families (the house of Kathros) was derided as follows:

Woe is me because of the House of Kathros,  
woe is me because of their pens ...  
For they are the high priests,  
And their sons are treasurers,  
and their sons-in-law are trustees,  
and their servants beat the people with staves

(Crossan & Reed 2004:254).

Here the house of Kathros is mocked with a ditty, and portrayed to be a ruthless family that kept power as far as possible within its own kin. According to the textual source, this family resorted even to violence through their retainers (and perhaps clients) to further their own ambitions. Avigad (1976:22–35) links the archaeological remains of the “Burnt House” in the Upper City with the House of Kathros. Remains include installations for the production of ink (note the use of “pens” in the ditty), as well as installations for the production of spices and incense. Perhaps the house of Kathros was given very valuable rights to the production of these goods for the Temple (Crossan & Reed 2001:255) — which would explain the line in the ditty describing their ruthless grip on power with nepotism and violence — and created the wealth that made such a dwelling possible. Archaeological remains of the Burnt House illustrate the wealth and luxurious trappings that the Judean elite enjoyed in the Upper City. One of the dwellings in this neighbourhood was about 600 square meters in size, and artefacts found indicate that no expenses were spared to decorate it with Pompeian style frescoes and mosaics (Goodman 1987:55).

## 6.2 TAXATION, TRIBUTE AND TITHES IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The primary mechanisms of this flow of resources towards the elite urban areas were commerce, taxation, tribute and tithes. Tribute is the payments made by a subjected people to their imperial rulers by means of tolls, duties and land tax. According to Roman political ideology, the wars that they waged were always just,

and therefore the expense of war, and the upkeep of military outposts (to ensure continued peace), were to be financed by the conquered people (Wengst 1986:28). Although this served the expansion of the Roman empire, it is reasonable to assume that it also served as a further humiliation of the subjected people: not only did they have to deal with the economic devastation in their country caused by war, but they had to compensate the Romans on top of it. No wonder that the Fourth Philosophy refused paying tribute, and promoted a core doctrine with a strong nationalistic undertone. According to Josephus, the founders of the Fourth Philosophy (Judas the Galilean and Sadduc the Pharisee) claimed that to submit under taxation is to become slaves, and that they encouraged non-compliance as a declaration of political liberty (*Ant.* 18.1). This action was akin to declaring war on the Roman empire, and Josephus seems to blame groups like the Fourth Philosophy for the Jewish War.<sup>77</sup> Military campaigns in early Roman Palestine (for example the campaigns of Herod the Great in 40–37 BCE and Varus in 4 BCE), as well as tribute would have had lasting economic consequences in the region. And non-payment of tribute was perceived as rebellion. When Gopha, Emmaus, Lydda and Thama delayed the tribute demanded by Cassius they were raided and enslaved (*J.W.* 1.11). Military campaigns and paying tribute formed a vicious cycle of economic deprivation.

Local taxation was the payment made to the local elite for the sake of local governance (Udoh 2010). In modern democratic political systems, the expectation is that the funds given to the local government have to be used for the service of the whole population. This is achieved by means of building and maintaining public infrastructure, and providing a form of basic services such as education and health care. In other words, there should be a just use for the finances contributed towards

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<sup>77</sup> “All sorts of misfortunes also sprang from these men, and the nation was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree; one violent war came upon us after another, and we lost our friends, who used to alleviate our pains; there were also very great robberies and murders of our principal men. This was done in pretense indeed for the public welfare, but in reality for the hopes of gain to themselves; whence arose seditions, and from them murders of men, which sometimes fell on those of their own people (by the madness of these men towards one another, while their desire was that none of the adverse party might be left), and sometimes on their enemies; a famine also coming upon us, reduced us to the last degree of despair, as did also the taking and demolishing of cities; nay, the sedition at last increased so high, that the very temple of God was burnt down by their enemy’s fire” (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1).

taxation, and there is a basic agreement between government and its constituents for the improvement of society as a whole. Whether this was the case in early Roman Palestine is doubtful. Certainly, one can argue that various public works such as the works by Herod on the Temple Mount, and the construction of Caesarea Maritima, served the larger population. This means that such building projects provided some employment, even if temporarily, for some of the population. The Temple Mount project also benefitted the city by improving the flow of traffic in Jerusalem as people thronged together during religious festivals (Ben-Dov 1986:41). These projects improved public infrastructure and provided employment, even if they did not embody a systematic programme of improving infrastructure and quality of life in early Roman Palestine as a whole.

But some scholars still argue that the way in which local taxation was applied as a whole, was problematic in early Roman Palestine. Hanson & Oakman (2008: Chapter 4 [Kindle edition]) describes the economic system of early Roman Palestine as extractive because the elite sought control of the production of goods by means of taxation, the control of labour as the peasantry worked on the public works and large elite landholdings, and the control of commerce. In other words, by controlling resources, they ensured the enrichment of the elite, and kept the non-elite in a position of powerlessness. Horsley (1987:29) takes it one step further by describing the taxation and tribute system in early Roman Palestine as a form of institutional violence towards the non-elite. In other words, tribute and taxation was exercised in such a way that it was morally unjust; it was espoused in the institutions of governance; and it was enforced on the non-elite. This meant that the non-elite had no recourse. There were no political or legal mechanisms by which the non-elite could voice the injustice they faced. The non-elite could not appeal to a court, or gain representation to influence the decision-making in their favour. Hence it could be seen as a form of political violence. This violence may be enforced (through the military) or covert (through the institutional laws and bodies in early Roman Palestine), but it was still violence because it was enforced upon the non-elite.

Religious taxation (in the form of tithes) also featured in early Roman Palestine. Religious taxation hence formed a triad of taxation with imperial tribute and local taxation. The triad of taxation in all likelihood created a burden that caused an

impoverished non-elite class who were already struggling with a subsistence lifestyle. Tithing did not assist in alleviating this pressure. More importantly, the Judean political and priestly elite were mostly one and the same group of people. In the process, the Judean priestly elite benefitted financially far beyond the norm as given by Jewish religious law (as traditionally stipulated in Deuteronomy 18:1–5). The royal priests became far more wealthy than the given, and owned an estimated 15% of the total land available (Crossan & Reed 2001:249). This links strongly with the indictment of Jesus that the Temple has become a “den of robbers” (Lk 19:45–46). The dismissive way in which the Gospels portray the Jesus movement paying tithes is insightful:

When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?” He said, “Yes, he does”. And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?” When Peter said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the children are free. However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me”.

(Mt 17:24–27, NRSV)

There are great differences of opinion on the actual total taxation burden in early Roman Palestine (Harland 2002:521–522). This grey area is created by the lack of concrete evidence because of a lack of sources in this regard. Estimates of total taxation (taxation, tribute and tithing combined) vary from 40% (Grant, Hanson and Horsley), 28–33% (Sanders) to 20–35% (Oakman). The lower the estimate of the total taxation burden on the peasantry, the less taxation is presented by the particular author as a contributing factor to social conflict in early Roman Palestine. Of course, the opposite also holds true: the higher the estimate given by the particular author, the more it is presented as a contributing factor to social conflict. Horsley (2009:84) argues a high estimate of taxation can be accepted because of the extensive building programmes of Herod the Great. Such a programme was likely to put an additional burden of taxation and labour on the non-elite, even if

Herod was able to fund large portions of the programme through trade and farming. As illustration, he refers to the remark of Josephus that Herod had to grant tax relief after a while to regain good will, and not to deplete his tax base (*Ant.* 15.10). Safrai (1994:352) argues that the issue of calculating the ancient tax burden is an arduous task, and declares that “it is basically impossible to determine how much taxes were paid by the inhabitants of Palestine and the percentages of those taxes were paid in cash”.

But perhaps the total burden of taxation is not the main factor as to determine its contribution to social conflict in early Roman Palestine. In the first place, however much the estimates of total taxation are placed at, it did add an additional burden to an already precarious financial situation for the non-elite. They still had to make do with a small surplus of produce — if any. Many factors, such as the damage to property due to military actions, the very financial nature of subsistence farming on peasant parcels of land, the occurrence of natural disasters such as drought, placed the peasantry in an extremely vulnerable position where low surplus reserves may fail. Furthermore, the payment of tribute should not be underestimated as it constituted a form of injustice and institutional violence. Although many sovereign states lost their status under the Roman imperium, and were subjected under tribute in a like manner, the credo of “no ruler but God” lent a particular nationalistic flavour to Judean non-elite politics. This much was a central ideology of the Fourth Philosophy. The heady experiment of Judean independence under the Hasmoneans was also still fresh in social memory. And of course, the formative Israelite traditions such as the Exodus and feats of the House of David countered economic and political subservience to the Roman overlords. Lastly, the structuring of the economy of early Roman Palestine was likely to enhance the control of the elite over the economy, leaving the non-elite with little to no recourse to voice their interest.

### **6.3 HOMELESSNESS AND BANDITRY IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

This financial burden of taxation was compounded by the increased appearance of larger elite estates. Land ownership in early Roman Palestine was made up of private estates, imperial lands (which were royal estates) and peasant holdings (Safrai 1994:327). There is some scholarly consensus that in early Roman Palestine

the balance of land ownership moved towards larger elite estates (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 4 [Kindle edition]).<sup>78</sup> These estates started encroaching on peasant smallholdings, and contributed to the landlessness of the peasantry. Since the economy of early Roman Palestine was an agrarian economy, it meant that should peasants lose their land, they were likely to be homeless as well, because in the process they lost their access to the economy. Landless, homeless peasants were extremely vulnerable. The alternative that evicted peasants faced, was to end up as seasonal workers on elite estates. This social reality is reflected in the Gospels in passages such as Mark 12:1 and Matthew 20:1–15.

Safrai (1994:327) and Gil (2006:324) provide the following reasons for the increase of elite estates at the cost of peasant smallholdings: The Herodians embarked on a programme of land appropriation in order to establish royal estates. In the process, the Herodians also confiscated land to give as a reward to their client followers as a reward for loyalty. Furthermore, military colonies were established and grew under the Herodians — land was taken for causes other than peasant farming. It seems likely that Roman veterans were settled on some land. The peasantry was likely to incur debt as a mechanism of survival when they failed to produce enough surplus. Crops were constantly under threat by phenomena such as drought. If they forfeited on the debt to the elite, their land was likely to be seized. Land was also appropriated for public works and building projects. And lastly, land was confiscated from those who were branded as criminals by the political elite. It is estimated that the royal estates of the Herodians alone could have taken up about two thirds of the fertile land in early Roman Palestine (Udoh 2010). This problem was compounded by the ever-smaller division of peasantry land due to marriage customs and inheritance laws (Gil 2006:324).

And if the twin dangers of increased debt, and the loss of land, were not enough of a threat to the peasantry, the appearance of larger estates essentially pushed the already limited produce of the peasantry out of the market. In short, the peasant could not commercially compete with larger estates. The larger the estate, the more

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<sup>78</sup> “An estate was a political, and in Roman law a legal, entity referring to land and product controlled by the elite” (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 4 [Kindle edition]).

beneficial agricultural practices such as long term planning, diversification of crops, and planting of more profitable crops could be implemented. New technologies could also be employed by larger estates. Examples of such technologies include aqueducts, roads and dams. Remains of such technologies were found at 'Ein Gedi (Edelstein 1990:32–42). By diversifying the crops, the financial risk of the failing of the crop is mitigated. For the peasant (who could not diversify), the failure of a single crop spelt financial, personal and household disaster.

Under this severe financial strain, it is quite likely that the peasantry faced a loss of land, and the prospect of homelessness. This social reality of homelessness is reflected in Gospel traditions. In Luke, Jesus intimates that “foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Lk 9:58, NRSV). In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1–6), a rich landowner goes out to the market place and finds labourers standing idly by. The landowner hires labourers for the day, but he repeats the process three more times as he finds labourers standing idly in the market place. The saying of Jesus in Luke 9:58, and the parable in Matthew 20:1–6, is only intelligible within a social phenomenon where the peasantry lost their ancestral land. And if they lost their land, then they were likely to be homeless as well.

But perhaps the strongest indication of the rise of homelessness in early Roman Palestine, was the rise of banditry. Although bandits can simply be dismissed as mere criminals, this approach glosses over larger social concerns that created the conditions for banditry to flourish in. Some authors, such as Hanson and Oakman, postulate that banditry went beyond mere criminality, and became an expression of political defiance by the economically deprived:

Social bandits are peasants who have been repressed and separated from their land and village. This is usually the result if they have been excessively taxed and forced to sell their land, have had their land confiscated by the elites, or have broken a law enforced by the elites. They lash out by organizing into bands that raid and steal to survive, usually from the local and imperial elites.

Hanson and Oakman (2008: Chapter 3 [Kindle edition])

In the writings of Josephus, a progression can be detected of banditry as a social phenomenon in early Roman Palestine. Already in the military campaigns of Herod the Great, banditry is presented as a real force of opposition. In trying to consolidate his power in early Roman Palestine, he was forced to subdue bandits who sought refuge in the caves in Galilee (*Ant.* 14.15; *J.W.* 1.16). Banditry then slowly developed to become a major source of concern to the latter Roman governors in Judea. Cumanus (48–52 CE), Felix (52–60 CE) and Albinus (62–64 CE) all had to launch military campaigns against the bandits (*Ant.* 20.6,9 & 11). This even caused much of the elite to leave the rural areas because it became dangerous for them (Horsley 1985:69). But it is especially during the Jewish War, that the impact of bandits was felt. By the time Josephus was appointed as the military commander in defence of Galilee, the bandits were already in military control of the area (Horsley 1985:69). Josephus indicated that he could not control or subdue them, but decided to rather try and co-opt the movement by employing them as mercenaries (*Life* 16).

Banditry in early Roman Palestine was likely to be shaped by the rich Davidic tradition of civil disobedience in the face of oppression. In 1 Samuel 22:2, a group of bandits gather around David, and under his messianic leadership they fight for a new future for both themselves and the nation of Israel: “Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Those who were with him numbered about four hundred” (1 Sam 22:2, NRSV). An even earlier tradition is reflected under the judge Jephthah, who was joined by “outlaws” (Jdgs11:3, NRSV) as he embarked on a programme of raiding.

Whatever the social view given of bandits in early Roman Palestine, they clearly represent an embittered and disenfranchised non-elite, who were desperate enough to engage in criminal activities, and face the wrath of the Roman and Judean elites. In the process they became emboldened enough to engage in raids and guerrilla attacks, as well as form alliances with each other (*Life* 27–28, *J.W.* 2.19). But equally, the light in which they perceived the Judean elite, and the general state of the country became clear: “...but still there were a great number who betook

themselves to robbing, in hopes of impunity; and rapines and insurrections of the bolder sort happened over the whole country” (*J.W.* 2.12).

#### **6.4 THE ALTERNATE ECONOMIC VIEW OF THE NON-ELITE**

A lack of sources makes it difficult to state the economic views of the non-elite in early Roman Palestine. However, earlier Israelite traditions again give an indication to the formative ideologies that may have influenced the non-elite. The Gospels may also inform to the economic philosophies of the non-elite — since the Gospels were written as a history from below (in other words, from a non-elite perspective).

The social conditions of Nehemiah present a close approximation to the plight of the non-elite in early Roman Palestine. As some of the Judean elite exiles resettles in Judea, the practice of appropriation of land flourished, as the non-elite became indebted to the elite:

Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish kin. For there were those who said, “With our sons and our daughters, we are many; we must get grain, so that we may eat and stay alive”. There were also those who said, “We are having to pledge our fields, our vineyards, and our houses in order to get grain during the famine”. And there were those who said, “We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king’s tax. Now our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, and our fields and vineyards now belong to others”. I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these complaints. After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, “You are all taking interest from your own people”. And I called a great assembly to deal with them.

(Neh 5:1–7, NRSV)

Here the political will of Judean leaders stands in stark contrast to the elite in early Roman Palestine. Nehemiah appeals to the covenantal fear of God to bring about reform.<sup>79</sup> This programme of reform entailed not charging interest on loans, and the return of land that was confiscated. This astounding about-turn by the Judean elite is singular in its example — even when earlier Israelite traditions are considered. But clearly this ideal was based on a deeper and stronger tradition of what it meant to be “Jewish”, and appealed to a covenantal sense of solidarity (“you are selling your own kin” [Neh 5:8, NRSV]). This ideal of covenantal solidarity harkens back to the Exodus tradition, where the covenantal ideal of political, social and economic freedom was expressed as a function of covenantal justice — all land belonged to God, and hence every family had to have access to the abundance of the Promised Land.

This line of thought did not start with the Exodus motif. In reality this tradition stretches even further back to the formative traditions of the patriarchs. In particular, the Abrahamic covenant remained the backbone of the formative ideals of Israel. In the case of Abraham, the identity of Israel as a sojourner looking for the Promised Land,<sup>80</sup> is connected with the central social value of kinship. Under Abraham the whole Israel is a family, and the household is the main social domain, the generator of commerce. This meant that the land was a patrimonial inheritance guaranteed by the divine promises given to Abraham (Brawley 2011:8). Hence land (and the resources it represented) had to be distributed in an equitable manner. For Brawley (2011:1–6) this connection between the covenantal ideal of Abraham, the deprived

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<sup>79</sup> “So I said, ‘The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God, to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us stop this taking of interest. Restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the interest on money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them.’ Then they said, ‘We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say.’ And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised” (Neh 5:9–12, NRSV).

<sup>80</sup> “The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever” (Gen 13:14–15, NRSV).

“See, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land that I swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them” (Deut 1:8, NRSV).

peasantry in early Roman Palestine, and the danger of homelessness among the peasantry is strong. This patrimonial inheritance of the land under the Abrahamic covenant is illustrated by the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11–32. For Brawley, under the Roman imperial domination, Judea was like the younger son who squandered his sacred patrimonial inheritance of land, and is now in exile politically. This link connects Abraham as the “father” of Judea, and God as the “Father” of Jesus. The re-establishment of the kin of Israel by means of the Abrahamic covenant implies a return from exile (as with the younger son in the parable).

This theological view re-enforces the household and kinship as the primary social domain. The fictive religious kinship (of being “sons of Abraham”) superseded the fictive political kinship of patronage between the Roman and Judean elite. It has been noted that Luke especially introduced a contrast between the Temple and the household as primary social institutions in the first century CE. “The Household, in fact, functions as Luke’s prime metaphor for depicting social life in the Kingdom of God” (Elliott 1991:117). But the point is that in the social institution of the household (as supported by the social domain of kinship), reciprocity worked very differently from the reciprocity espoused by political patronage. Whereas political patronage envisages a negative reciprocity (resources flows upward towards the elite), the household had a balanced reciprocity (resources are used equitably, or even distributed to the weaker members of the family). This expectation of balanced and positive reciprocity was a marker of kinship, and was likely to serve as the model of non-elite economic expectations. This becomes especially poignant as the financial centralisation of the Temple is presented as a den of robbers, in contrast to the house of prayer (Lk 19:46). A den of robbers can hardly be described as an expression of kinship (as opposed to the house of prayer). But more so robbers extract resources unlawfully — as opposed to the house of prayer, where all have access to God as children of Abraham.

## **6.5 SUMMARY: THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

According to the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013 — see Addendum A), elite Judean ideology in the various social domains followed a line of socio-political

prioritisation where politics was the most influential domain, followed by culture and then followed by economics. The reasoning behind this is that Roman patronage was the overwhelming political reality that placed and kept the Judean elite in power (§ 4.1.3). However, Roman patronage did not necessarily provide legitimacy (and credibility) among the local population for their leadership. Here the cultural domain comes in with the use of the Temple as a predominant cultural symbol (§ 5.2). The interconnection between the priestly elite and their leadership of the Temple, as well as their political connection to Roman and Herodian patrons, gave the local elite legitimacy in early Roman Palestine. Simply put — the Judean elite still led the non-elite because of their position as the priestly elite of the Temple. But in reality, the Judean elite was only kept in that position due to Roman patronage. This twin base of power allowed the Judean elite to enact a policy of centralisation of resources towards Jerusalem, the Temple, and Rome. This centralisation was extractive, since much needed resources probably did not flow back to the desperate non-elite. This resulted in the loss of land, homelessness, and even banditry.

However, according to the model, the non-elite also adopted a hierarchy of socio-political prioritisation that illustrates their vision of an alternative society (§ 3.4). According to this hierarchy, the religious concept of covenantal justice shaped the economic ideal of distribution. Economics was subservient to the religion domain (Addendum A). In this philosophy, God owned the land and provided access to the land (and thus the economy in an agriculture-based society) because of covenantal justice. Covenantal justice meant that ultimately, resources were never privately owned (or owned in a group or kinship setting), since it belonged to God; resources had to be applied and distributed in a just and equitable way in accordance with the nature of God. This did not mean that there were no economic classes (rich/elite and poor/non-elite) under such a dispensation, but the ideal was always held that every person could find refuge under his or her own vine and fig tree (Mic 4:4). There had to be recourse for the poor to maintain a relative life of dignity. Various mechanisms, such as the Jubilee, were idealised as ways for resources to flow back towards those who fell on hard times (Crossan 2007:70–71). The primary institution that modelled this ideology was the household (kinship), where generalised reciprocity was practiced, and the ideal of covenantal solidarity held sway.

This contrast between the extraction and distribution of resources is critiqued by Luke during the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus in the passage of the question of the paying tribute in Luke 20:20–26. In this pericope, the question of the extraction of resources is highlighted by the question of what belongs to Caesar, and what belongs to God. Roman patronage was a sword of Damocles (which also threatened the Jesus movement), but the theological issue of what is owed to God was also placed in opposition to Roman patronage.

## 6.6 THE QUESTION OF PAYING TRIBUTE AND ECONOMICS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, “Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?” They said, “The emperor’s”. He said to them, “Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s”. And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent.

(Lk 20:20–26, NRSV)

The Question of Paying Tribute is one of the more familiar discourses of Jesus, and appears in all the synoptic Gospels (Mt 22:15–22; Mk 12:13–17). The Roman coin in question (a denarius — δηνάριον) represented poll tax (and perhaps even symbolised land tax) as the sum total of the required tribute (Garland 2012:800). The poll tax of a denarius was equivalent to a day’s labour. If only poll tax is considered, the financial burden was not severe. It still would have rankled, since it implied a loss of independence to the Romans, and therefore a form of political servitude. However, if tribute included land tax as well, then injury was also added to insult, since it would have placed a severe additional strain on resources of the non-elite.

Three broad lines of interpretation have been offered of Luke 20:20–26 (Fitzmeyer 2008:1292–1293): the first line of interpretation is that of a two-kingdom model. This exegetical line has been in use since the Patristic times, and argues that the spiritual Kingdom of God, and the political kingdom of Caesar, co-exists as overlapping, but are distinctly separate. This idea taps into older Judean ideals conveyed by passages such as Daniel 2:21,37–38; Proverbs 8:15–16 and Wisdom of Solomon 6:1–11. In this line of interpretation, the Kingdom of God, although inaugurated, does not surpass or replace current socio-political kingdoms. This view safeguards the sovereignty of the Kingdom of God, but it does not encourage political revolt or rebellion. Actual readers are left with the question of what respectively is their obligation to Caesar, and what ought to be given to God. Their obligations to both can be, and should be, fulfilled.

The weakness of this argument lies in the question itself. The question presupposes an examination of what actually belongs to God and what belongs to Caesar (since that answer determines what ought to be given to each). But, in the face of a sovereign God, and an all-powerful monotheistic God; the things that might actually belong to Caesar are very little to nothing at all. All things come from God, and all things are given by God. So, all things ought to be given back to God. This also has a strong underlying Old Testament tradition. For example, Psalm 24:1 expounds the prior claim of God as Creator on all the earth: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it...” (NRSV). It is hard to imagine that in Jesus’ vision of God; the divine becomes a tribal god whose claim is limited to the Temple or to Israel; that the claim of Caesar is at the very least equal to God. It is highly unlikely that Jesus would advocate a separation of state and religion, when the embedded nature of social systems is taken into account. Furthermore, this line of reasoning is unlikely when the narrative is taken in account, since Jesus would fall into the trap set by the spies, and lose honour among his followers — since thereby he would have equated Caesar to God (Lk 20:26).

The second line of interpretation is the so-called ironic interpretation. The thought here is that Jesus employs irony as a rhetoric device. The recommendation of giving

back (ἀπόδοτε, NA<sup>27</sup>) is simply a pun intended on the Roman clients. As Fitzmeyer (2008:1293) explains it: “One gives to caesar what belongs to him, but of what importance is that *vis-à-vis* the kingdom of God?” Textually, this argument is supported by how the conjunction και is used, not the conjunction ἀλλά. This means that the first statement is not placed in contrast to the first (which would then rhetorically separate the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar), but rather the two kingdoms are brought rhetorically on the same footing — the kingdom of Caesar brought face to face with the Kingdom of God. In such case the kingdom of Caesar diminishes before the might of God (Borg & Crossan 2009: Chapter 3 [Kindle edition]).

The narrative problem with this line of reasoning is that the enemies of Jesus were “...amazed by his answer, they became silent” (Lk 20:26, NRSV). If it was the case that the statement of Jesus simply belittled their questioning, they would have rejoiced since they would have succeeded in entrapping Jesus. They could deliver him to the Roman authorities for insurrection. Rather, the text indicates that something about his answer left them astounded.

The third line of interpretation is the so-called anti-Zealot interpretation. In this line Jesus gives no quarter to either the side of those who held that no tribute should be paid, or those who stressed Roman patronage. Rather, Jesus moves the answer to a deeper metaphysical plane. Whereas the spies asked a socio-political question that impacted the economic environment of early Roman Palestine; Jesus gave an answer that caused both parties to this question to give an answer of ethical value. Textually, this line of interpretation focuses on the command: “But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, ‘Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?’ They said, ‘The emperor’s.’” (Lk 20:23–24, NRSV).

In the aphorism, the things that belongs to Caesar (τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι, NA<sup>27</sup>) and the things that belongs to God (τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ, NA<sup>27</sup>) are determined by whose image is stamped on it. In the case of Caesar, his image is stamped on money,

whereas in the case of God, his image is stamped on people (Gen 1:27).<sup>81</sup> Where Caesar demands tribute, God demands worship. Caesar and his client household values economic resources; God is worshipped by his household (Israel) by how people are valued (Gundry 1982:443). The ingenuity of this line of reasoning is that it attacks the economic extraction policies of the Roman and Judean elite — but it does not do so in a direct way. Rather, it leaves the implied audience and actual readers to make the connection. The answer undermines the economic extraction for resources from the non-elite as a socio-political policy because it puts the focus on the human cost, and suffering because of that policy.

If people are valuable to God, then the responsibility is upon the Judean leadership to rightly fulfil “what is lawful” (Lk 20:22) — and that is to practice covenantal justice. To be “right” with God and worship him (Lk 20:21) is to “...do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic 6:8, NRSV). Caesar may very well want his tribute, but God will look carefully at how people are affected in the process. This is the worship due to God. But it also undermines the desire of revolt against Rome. Should this interpretation be accepted that “the things” of God are people, and the premium that God places on the wellbeing of people be honoured, then this desire of revolt had to carefully weighed up with the human cost and suffering involved. And as sources such as Josephus depict, the cost at the end of the day was horrendous. This interpretation undermines the notions from both sides that they were in the right with God. It answers the concerns of the second line of interpretation (what really belongs to Caesar in comparison to the sovereign God), but also explains the response of the spies in the text — they were not able to trap Jesus in their question, and were astounded by his answer.

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<sup>81</sup> This line of interpretation also has a long tradition. For example, Tertullian explains the passage as: “Render unto Caesar, the image of Caesar, which is on the money, and unto God, the image of God, which is in man; so that thou givest unto Caesar money, unto God thine own self” (*Idol.* 15; *Marc.* 4.38.3).

## 6.6.1 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE QUESTION OF PAYING TRIBUTE

### 6.6.1.1 Dyadic and Legal Contracts and Agreements

Although the spies' question to Jesus raises issues of justice, independence and a longing for theocratic nationalism; the political complexity of the question actually lies in the social convention of patronage (Moxnes 1991:258). This pits the political realities of Roman patronage against the religious ideals of the patronage of the God of Israel. In that sense, the trap is finely laid — but it is also too finely laid. By stating the question, the question itself backfires on the spies and their patrons. After all, the “scribes and chief priests” (Lk 20:19, NRSV) that sent the spies refers to the priestly elite and their retainers. The irony is that by asking the question “in order to trap him by what he said” (Lk 20:20, NRSV), they admit their political dependence on their Roman patrons. The hypocrisy is that their office as the Judean priestly elite was supposedly based on the patronage of God. In Luke, Jesus springs the reverse trap by asking that they produce a Roman denarius (Lk 20:24). By producing the denarius, the spies are unwittingly admitting their patron-client dependence on the Romans, instead of their sacerdotal obligation to God.

This antagonism between the patronage of God, and the patronage of Caesar, is made vivid when the nature of a Roman denarius is taken in account. Although it cannot be stated with certainty, the denarius in question is often taken to refer to the silver denarius of Caesar Tiberius (DeBloois 1997:240). The coin bore the image of Caesar as the divine son of Augustus, as well as an inscription of the high priest on the reverse. Therefore, not only does the coin break Jewish sensibility against aniconography, but it also was a form of Roman propaganda which proclaimed the divine qualities of the Caesar (Marshall 1978:735–736). Either way, the coin could be construed as blasphemous to Judaism. Here a profound irony is present. According to Josephus, the people of Jerusalem were prepared to die before they would allow the imagery of Caesar on standards into the city (*Ant.* 18.3). And yet they were

prepared to have the coinage in circulation that bears the same imagery of Caesar,<sup>82</sup> even carrying it around on their person. What would be a principled stand in the one instance (not allowing the standards into the city) became acceptable in the other case — all because of the sheer importance of money. It is hard to see that the priestly elite would expose themselves in a public setting, and may explain why spies are sent to ask the question instead of the priestly elite themselves.

In contrast to this axiology of money, the patronage of God means that financial resources have little to no value for the Jesus followers. In the words of Keener (2009:526): “In Jesus’ teaching elsewhere, possessions have zero value, and those who seek them are not the simple who trust in God”. Luke 14:33 elevates this principle even more: “So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions” (NRSV). The prime example of a teaching of this loose connection with money (under the patronage of God) is presented in Luke 12:29–33 (NRSV):

And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

Here the proclamation of Jesus is that God is more than willing (“good pleasure”) to confer a kingdom upon God’s covenantal people. This invokes the language of patronage where a party with great resources and power, gives to another party with far lesser resources — with an expectation of a reciprocated honour relationship. This promise of patronage, negates the fear that a lack of earthly possessions

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<sup>82</sup> Current thought is that copper coins were minted locally without the imagery of Caesar to avoid aniconography. However, the silver coins were only allowed to be printed at the imperial mint — hence the imagery of Caesar was freely in circulation in Jerusalem (Sanders 1985:242–44).

brings. This fearlessness is brought about by the promise of patronage, but also because of a value shift from the material to the spiritual. The true unfailing treasure are no longer on earth but in heaven. Therefore, an earthly treasure becomes subservient to the heavenly treasures, and the earthly treasures ought to be used as an investment in the heavenly treasures. It is instructive in Luke how the earthly treasures are to be used in service of the poor (“sell your possessions, and give alms”). This value stands in stark contrast to the emphasis that political patronage brings to earthly treasure.

This pending clash between the Jerusalem elite and the Jesus movement around the values of Roman patronage, and patronage under God, is already pre-empted in Luke’s story of a rich ruler. Here the rich ruler is far more sympathetic to the Jesus movement than the Jerusalem religious elite, and demonstrates a desire to be right with God (“what must I do to inherit eternal life”, in Lk 18:18 [NRSV]). The manner of the rich ruler is in contrast with the Judean elite in Luke 20:20–26, who is trying to trap Jesus in a cynical manner. However, the elite ruler was still wealthy (Lk 18:23), and although Luke does not inform the implied reader concerning the source of the riches of this ruler, he was still likely to be part of the elite class who derived their riches from Roman patronage.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me”. But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

(Lk 18:22–24, NRSV)

Here Luke depicts the difficulty when the Judean elite is challenged to change their allegiance from the things of Caesar to the things of God. Like the client servants in the parable of the Throne Claimant (Lk 19:11–27), they become entrapped in the system of patronage. And the power of this trap laid not only in a fear of Roman retaliation, but also in the wealth it provided. Luke goes one step further than this example, and portrays some of the enemies of Jesus as giving themselves over willingly to the snare of patronage because of greed. In response to the teaching on

God and Mammon, Luke depicts the Pharisees in the following way: “The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. So he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God” (Lk 16:14–15, NRSV). Although Luke does not mention the sectarian membership of the elite in Luke 20, the Matthean version indicates the combination of the Pharisees and the Herodian elite who is behind the questioning of Jesus (Mt 22:15–16). It is a step too far to argue that the text indicates a strong patron/client bond between the Pharisees and the Herodian elite<sup>83</sup> — but nevertheless Luke’s point remains that some of the elite simply could not give allegiance to God, because their allegiance was to Mammon. In such a case there was a double bind on the elite, given the ensnaring power of money and the obligations due to their Roman patrons.

The answer of Jesus easily could have diminished the honour of the priestly elite in Luke 20:20–26. He could point out the various hypocrisies involved. But it also created a dangerous moment for the Jesus movement. Should the answer sneer at the patronage of Caesar, the priestly elite succeeded and they could then “hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor” (Lk 20:20, NRSV). Although Luke presents their immediate response as being “amazed”, and becoming “silent” (Lk 20:26), in retrospect it seems in narrative that they did consider the answer of Jesus as an encouragement for civil disobedience. In Luke 23:2 the first accusation against Jesus is given as: “They began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king’” (NRSV).

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<sup>83</sup> Rather Moxnes (1988:106–107), argues that the Pharisees served the purpose of the Judean elite by shoring up a societal homeostasis, and thereby helped to maintain the favourable status quo for the elite. The Pharisees achieved this by providing societal meaning to the non-elite with their programme of ritual purity. This programme created the impression that the non-elite were actively contributing in sanctifying early Roman Palestine (Deines 2010). This meant that the non-elite was more likely to actively participate in society, thereby allowing the Judean elite to continue with their agenda unabatedly. For Moxnes, Luke depicts the Pharisees as willing participants since they were lovers of money. They were corrupt by association and by complicity.

### 6.6.1.2 Challenge-Riposte

The question on whether tribute should be paid to God (Lk 20:20–26), forms part of a larger cycle of the Judean priestly elite questioning Jesus in Luke 20. The aim of the questioning of the priestly elite follows challenge-riposte conventions. The aim of challenge-riposte is to diminish the honour of the challenged party with a public challenge. The priestly elite attacks the status of Jesus as a holy man in Luke 20, by implying that his authority is not really from God. The question of the tribute of Caesar falls into the second cycle of questions (of three).

Whereas the first cycle is posed as a direct question about the origin of the authority of Jesus,<sup>84</sup> the second cycle is more indirect. In Luke 20:21 (NRSV), Jesus was firstly praised in order to elevate his status as a teacher: “So they asked him, ‘Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth.’” Then, the angle of the challenge is set with the preamble of the question: “Is it lawful for us?” (Lk 20:22). By praising Jesus as a faithful (“you are right”) teacher of the Law (“teaches the way of God in accordance to truth”), Jesus is now bound to answer not according to the social need that arose from the payment of tribute, nor according to the issue of justice in paying tribute, nor even to provide an answer that may avoid the issue — but he is simply bound to answer according to a reading of the Law. Perhaps the assumption of the priestly elite was that this preamble would force Jesus to answer that Caesar is inferior compared to the covenantal claims of the sovereignty of God — and hence expose himself to Roman prosecution. But if he answered that it was lawful to pay tribute (and hence the covenant claims of God are inferior to Caesar), his honour as a teacher of the Law would be severely undermined among the subjected non-elite.

In the convention of challenge-riposte, it is up to the challenged person to respond sufficiently to either maintain or enhance his own status. Luke indicated that Jesus achieved this with his riposte. Not only were they “not able in the presence of the

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<sup>84</sup> “and said to him, “Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?”” (Lk 20:2, NRSV).

people to trap him by what he said” but they were also “amazed by his answer”. It seems that the spies (and by extension their elite patrons) lost prestige in the process since “they became silent” (Lk 20:26, NRSV). The stunning hypocrisy of the priestly elite is exposed in a very subtle way (should the third line of interpretation — the anti-Zealot answer — be followed [§ 6.6]). Luke here exposes the supposed protectors of the Law, as the very ones that uses the Law to entrap Jesus. Furthermore they belied their true allegiance to Caesar — and set their allegiance to God in doubt — even when they get to set the terms of the challenge-riposte.

### **6.6.1.3 Agriculturally Based, Industrial, and Technological Economic Exchange Systems**

In an agricultural economy, a system of distribution of resources is based on the social convention of reciprocity. Here the role of the household and kinship played a central role. The ideal in a peasantry community was balanced reciprocity, where resources were equitably distributed within the extended family (and community); or positive reciprocity — where generosity was exercised for the benefit of a member of the extended family. In Luke, multiple sayings give voice to balanced and positive reciprocity: “Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk 6:30–31, NRSV); and, “give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (Lk 6:38, NRSV). Here sharing and giving is an essential part of social relationships, and when requested, positive reciprocity should be seen as a social norm. Giving becomes a command, and by extension, a way of life for the Jesus movement.

The question of tribute towards the Roman overlords is, however, a prime example of negative reciprocity. Resources flow towards a centralised elite, with little to no mechanisms of a trickle-down economy. This means that resources were removed from the community, and this left communities, already struggling with subsistence farming, even in direr straits. This is in contrast with the Jesus movement, who advocated a strong sense of positive reciprocity. An example of such positive reciprocity (or generosity) is recommended in Luke 14:12–14 (NRSV):

He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous”.

The difference between the extractive policies of the Judean elite, and the Lukan instruction could not be bigger. The Jesus movement is commanded here to go beyond the expected norm of balanced reciprocity. It is not enough to share only with those who can reciprocate. The extractive policies of the elite caused havoc with peasantry communities. It probably added to the number of “poor, the crippled, the lame, and blind”. They are classified here as those who are not “neighbours”. They are the ones who cannot reciprocate in like, because they simply do not have resources. The answer for Luke lies in taking a radical stance on reciprocity. Positive reciprocity (generous giving) becomes an imperative. This radical lifestyle was to set a symbolic and theological example that would convict others to change their lifestyle. It also provided a practical mechanism to address some of the consequences of poverty (like sharing food with those in need).

#### **6.6.1.4 Summary of Socio-Cultural Texture**

The socio-cultural texture examines the presuppositional matrix of the question of paying tribute. The question asked in Luke 20:22 can only exist in the socio-political context of patronage. Patronage created a set of social obligations that clients had to fulfil reciprocally. This explains why the seemingly different kingdom of Caesar (which is socio-political), can be directly compared to the Kingdom of God (which is religio-political). The connecting point between the two kingdoms is the patronage of Caesar and the patronage of God. Patronage by these two entities can create competing sets of obligations that create a problem to the clients of Caesar and of God. Is it really possible to serve two masters?

Although the spies tried to entrap Jesus in their challenge-riposte, ironically they did not realise that they themselves are asking predetermined questions since their client relationship to Caesar forces them to do so. They are really the ones who are entrapped — as illustrated by the servants (clients) in the parable of the Throne Claimant (§ 4.3).

The stance of Jesus is radically different and lays strong emphasis on positive reciprocity. Where the kingdom of Caesar is extractive, the Kingdom of God is distributive. It is the pleasure of the Father to confer a kingdom on the children of Abraham (even the least and homeless of those). The benevolent and munificent giving of the Father, provides the context, and sets the example, for the other children of the household to do the same. Resources and wealth can either be a trap (in the kingdom of Caesar), or a wise investment when used for positive reciprocity (in the Kingdom of God). To gain treasures in heaven is to financially help those who cannot repay, and to give to those who are in need.

## 6.6.2 THE INTERTEXTURE TEXTURE OF THE QUESTION OF PAYING TRIBUTE

### 6.6.2.1 Oral-Scrabal Intertexture

#### 6.6.2.1.1 Traditions concerning Jesus

The question on the legality of paying tribute is widely recorded by various sources. It appears in all of the synoptic Gospels. Both Mark and Matthew present the authorities behind the questioning as the Pharisees and the Herodians (Mk 12:13 and Mt 22:15–16). In Luke, a more generic group (the “scribes and the chief priests”) is pointed out (Lk 20:19, NRSV). It seems that Luke is more interested in using a description that indicated the power relationship — the priestly elite in contrast to the popular prophet Jesus. This line of thought continues in Luke 20. In the next cycle of challenge-riposte concerning the authority of Jesus, the Sadducees (Lk 20:27) ask questions. The Sadducees were the most likely sect to have members of the priestly elite in their midst. Both Mark and Matthew emphasise the test (or challenge) that it puts Jesus under (Mk 12:15 and Mt 22:18). Whereas Luke emphasises the

“craftiness” (πανουργία) of the opponents of Jesus as the main focal point (Lk 20:23); in Mark they are noted to have “hypocrisy” (ὑπόκρισις in Mk 12:15); in Matthew they are noted to have “malice” (πονηρία in Mt 22:18). Otherwise the narrative and sayings follow each other closely.

This pattern of close conformation follows in other textual sources. In the Egerton papyrus 2 (fragment 2r) the question of paying tribute is seemingly combined with Johannine material (Fitzmeyer 2008:1290):

[Com]ing to him in[quisitorial]ly, they tried to test him, sa[ying], “Jesus, Teacher, we know that you have come [from God], for what you are doing bears te[stimony] beyond (that of) all th[e] prophets. [Tell] us [then], Is it lawful to [pa]y kings what ap[per]tains to (their) rule? [Should we] pay [th]em or not?” But Jesus, realizing [the]ir [in]tention, said [to th]em in an[ger]. ‘Why do you call me with yo[ur mou]th “Master,” while you list[en no]t to what I [s]ay? Well indeed has Is[ai]ah pro[phesi]ed [of y]ou, saying, “[Th]is [people honors] me with the[ir li]ps, [but] the[ir hea]rt sta[y]s far from me. In vai[n they reverence me]; [their] pre[cepts ...].’

Justin Martyr preserves another variant: “For about that time some people came up to him and asked him whether one ought to pay taxes to Caesar. And he answered, ‘Tell me, whose image does the coin bear?’ And they said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Again he replied, ‘Pay, then, to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (*Apol.* 1.17, 2).

Finally, the Gospel of Thomas (*logion* 100) recounts this incident as follows: “They showed Jesus a gold (coin) and said to him, ‘Caesar’s agents demand of us taxes.’ He said to them, ‘Give Caesar the things of Caesar; give God the things of God, and what is mine give me.’”

So, in the Egerton papyrus a further comment is given as to the worship of God with regard to the question of the payment of tribute. Here the hardness of their hearts is emphasised (“their hearts stay far from me”). The Gospel of Thomas adds a possible

Gnostic element (Fitzmeyer 2008:1293) by appearing to elevate Jesus above God (the order is indicated as one of increasing importance from Caesar to God to Jesus), and depicts the coin as a gold coin instead of a silver denarius.

But the main point here is the consistency of the narrative and sayings involved in many of the Jesus traditions. It is clear that the saying was an important element of how the various Jesus traditions saw the response of the Jesus on the social challenges that was experience in the Roman empire.

#### 6.6.2.1.2 The apologetic texts of Josephus

The apologetic writings of Josephus depict an earlier incident that holds close proximity to the question asked of Jesus. The census of Quirinius in 6–7 CE (which would have ensured an up-to-date record of possible tax payers in early Roman Palestine), sparked many revolts (Nolland 1998:958). According to Josephus, this revolt developed as follows: “Under his administration it was that a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own, and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders” (*J.W.* 2.8). Josephus (*Ant.* 18.1) describes the motive behind this movement as follows:

But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty; and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value dying any kind of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man Lord; and since this immovable resolution of theirs is well known to a great many, I shall speak no farther about that matter; nor am I afraid that anything I have said of them should be disbelieved, but rather fear, that what I have said is beneath the resolution they show when they undergo pain; and it was in Gessius Florus’s time that the nation began to grow mad with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the

abuse of his authority, and to make them revolt from the Romans; and these are the sects of Jewish philosophy.

Although the texts of Josephus and Luke comes roughly from the same era (the Jewish War was completed in the mid-80s CE and Antiquities by 93 CE [Spilsbury 2013:445]), the text reflects on an event before the ministry of Jesus. However, the slogan given of the Fourth Philosophy (namely that God is to be their only ruler and Lord), appears to be reconfigured in the question of the spies. The texts of Josephus illustrate the political impact of the question of paying tribute exceptionally well. The census of Quirinius finally pushed some of the rural areas of early Roman Palestine over the edge. The consequences were one of political instability. It committed the Roman and Judean elite to more violent responses. Josephus describes the result of this movement as adding oil to the fire, and that in the time of Florus “the nation began to grow mad with this distemper”.<sup>85</sup> Clearly the Roman overlords would be very careful to douse out an inflammatory repetition of these political ideologies — hence the gist of trap set for Jesus in Luke 20:20–26. Such a declaration of God as the “only ruler and Lord” would be met with immediate action.

#### 6.6.2.1.3 The traditions concerning Abraham

One of the important overarching arguments of this dissertation is that Luke makes a strong connection between his Gospel and the traditions of Abraham (§ 8.3). In a sense, these traditions of Abraham are the origin stories of the Jewish nation. To be a descendant of Abraham is to be a true Israelite (Luke 1:55; 3:8,34; 13:16,28; 16:22,24,30; 19:9). In Chapter 5, the argument is made that since the dominant cultural influence of the Temple proved problematic to the popular movements, they appealed to earlier Israelite traditions (like the stories of Abraham, Moses, David and

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<sup>85</sup> To be fair, the apologetic historiography of Josephus moves him to pin the blame of the Jewish War on the non-elite Judean and Galilean factions (Huntsman 1997:398). This creates a question of whether Josephus was not overplaying the role of the Fourth Philosophy. In other words, the danger exists that he may have inflated the role of the Fourth Philosophy and the resultant reactions.

Jeremiah) to seek for cultural links and symbols that could convey the ideologies of the non-elite popular movements (§ 5.3).

There is an earlier tradition of Abraham that ties with the question of economic distribution in Israel. In the first place, the resources that the land offered (in an agricultural economy such as early Roman Palestine) is guaranteed through the mechanism of covenant. This land is perpetually in the hands of the sons of Abraham: “I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God” (Gen 17:7–8, NRSV). The concept of this was not necessarily to be exclusive and alienating to others — since the preamble to the promise include “I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you” (Gen 17:6, NRSV). This is the seminal form of the New Testament understanding that the mission of Jesus has a global aspect, and that as the fulfilment of the promises given to Abraham, they are to be a blessing to the nations. But this may very well be what spurred the Fourth Philosophy on the creed of God as their only ruler. The land is given by the covenant, and not to be distributed according to the whim of Roman and Herodian patrons.

Furthermore, another Abrahamic tradition comments on the “things that belong to God” with the story of Melchizedek.

After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

(Gen 14:17–20, NRSV)

Now, regardless of the views of other New Testament authors of this narrative (such as the high Christological view in Hebrews 6:13–7:28), Genesis 14:17–20 demonstrates a close connection between religious giving (or taxation should the tenth in verse 20 be interpreted as a tithe), and the covenantal actions between Abraham and God. Melchizedek is pictured as a “priest of the most high God”; offers bread and wine as covenantal actions; and then finally blesses Abraham with the singular promise that God “has delivered your enemies into your hand”. As a ratifying response of this covenantal blessing Abraham gives a tenth to the priest.

To be fair, this reconfiguration of the Abrahamic traditions is but a faint echo in the text of Luke 20:20–26. Rather, it suggests that the question of the things of God and the things of Caesar has a far longer narrative trajectory than immediately supposed (when reading the text of Luke 20:20–26). The rich tradition concerning resources, the covenant, and the people of the land stretches all the way back to the traditions concerning Abraham. This raises the point that the use of money is wholly a covenantal matter. The question of what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God, may have more implications than the antagonists of Jesus realised in formulating the question. It connects well with the Lukan portrayal of the use of money in religious terms. “No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Lk 16:13, NRSV). This intertextual connection links the issue of the use of resources and money, taxation, and the covenant very intimately. It conveys the point that the use of money, and how the elite exercises power in obtaining resources is a very deep theological and religious question. It further undermines the exegetical line that Jesus advocated a form of the separation of church and state in Luke 20:20–26. After all, you cannot serve both God and money.

#### **6.6.2.2 Summary of Intertextual Texture**

When the intertexture connections of Luke 20:20–26 are considered, the depth and complexity of the passage becomes clear. The answer Jesus gives in Luke, and other texts, is of the utmost importance to the Jesus movement. It directly addresses the flammable socio-political situation in early Roman Palestine, and set an example

for later Jesus communities of how to orientate themselves in the larger Roman imperium. The importance of the saying is illustrated by the preservation thereof in diverse Jesus traditions. The socio-political weight of the matter of tribute is depicted in the texts of Josephus. The applicable Abrahamic traditions also offer an often overlooked angle to the question. The use of money has a strong connection to the covenant, and hold possible ethical implications. The dimension of money and resources cannot merely be socio-political; all use of money has moral dimensions.

### 6.6.3 THE INNER TEXTURE OF THE QUESTION OF PAYING TRIBUTE

Various elements of an inner texture as well as rhetorical devices appear in Luke 20:20–26. The words “God” (Lk 20:21,25) and “emperor” (Καῖσαρ in Lk 20:22,24,25) are each repeated three times. This repetitive texture<sup>86</sup> of God, and Caesar, in equal measure helps to create the sense of antagonism between the two entities. It is either God or Caesar. The Kingdom of God is ominously set against the kingdom of Caesar. This sense of antagonism sets suspense for the audience, since the outcome of the challenge-riposte implies severe consequences for Jesus. It holds deep socio-political implications for the broader society of early Roman Palestine.

A progressive texture and pattern<sup>87</sup> also occur in the pericope. In Luke 20:21 the spies start this progression with the claim of “what you say and teach” (λέγεις καὶ διδάσκεις, NA27). This phrase then progresses as the spies claim that what Jesus say and teach is “in accordance to truth” (ἐπ’ ἀληθείας, NA27). The final step of progression is where the spies spring the trap by asking what is “lawful” (ἔξεστιν, NA27 in Lk 20:22). This progression from “say” to “truth” to “lawful” illustrate how the spies used flattery to build up the prestige of Jesus in public. The aim of building up

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<sup>86</sup> Repetitive texture is “the occurrence of words and phrases more than once in a unit” (Robbins 1996a:8).

<sup>87</sup> Progressive texture and pattern refers in the sequence (or progression) of words and phrases in the exegetical unit. It demonstrates a development of thought or events in the pericope (Robbins 1996a:10).

prestige was to create a higher social height to fall from into dishonour, as well as to set a false sense of security in Jesus, before springing the trap.

The pericope also makes use of an opening-middle-closing texture and pattern<sup>88</sup> to emphasise the narrative. In the opening segment, the spies “pretended to be honest, in order to trap him” (Lk 20:20). However, in the middle segment, “he perceived their craftiness” (Lk 20:23), and the method of laying praise on him (to lead him to a false sense of security) is lost. In the closing segment, the spies were “amazed by his answer, they became silent” (Lk 20:26). The opening-middle-closing sequence in Luke 20:20–26 illustrates how Jesus is more than ready for the rigours of the challenge-riposte, and that his riposte astonishes his enemies — and even cause a measure of cognitive dissonance (they “became silent”).

Lastly, the pericope has an underlying, but powerful, set of argumentative textures and patterns.<sup>89</sup> Although the arguments used here are very memorable as sayings, the format of these arguments is not easily discernible. This may contribute to the differences in the reading of the pericope by various exegetes. It would appear that Jesus changed the format of the argument from how it was given by the spies. This illustrates how Jesus changed the metaphysical level of the riposte in the Gospels, and caused cognitive dissonance among his antagonists.

The expectation of the spies (and their patrons), is that the questions (and hence answer) is set in a logical progression argument.<sup>90</sup> In this logical progression argument, the trap is iron clad. The answer is binary. It is either a “yes” or a “no”.

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<sup>88</sup> The opening-middle-closing texture examines the nature of how the beginning, middle and end of the exegetical unit influences the pericope. The difficulty with this texture is how to define what exactly the opening, middle and end of the unit are (Robbins 1996a:19). The approach in determining the location of the opening, middle and end here has been to identify the inner motives and emotions of the characters in the narratives. These motives and emotional reactions correlate with the placement of the opening, middle and end sentences in the pericope.

<sup>89</sup> The argumentative texture examines the “multiple kinds of inner reasoning in the discourse” (Robbins 1996a:21).

<sup>90</sup> A logical progression argument aims to conduct the argument step by step. Since this argument aims to be “perfect”, the actual reader (or characters) can expect specific answers since the argument leads them to it (Robbins 1996a:23).

Therefore, the argument can progress in only two distinct ways and the actual reader can expect a certain outcome. Either outcome of the logical progression argument would have severe consequences for the Jesus movement. This leaves the actual reader in suspense. The outline of the two available answers of the logical progression arguments looks like this:

major premise: it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar.

rationale: Roman patronage does not clash with God's covenantal claim on land.

conclusion: Jesus does not really differ from the elite. The prestige and the authority of the Judean elite is established.

or, as the other alternative:

major premise: it is not lawful to pay tribute to Caesar.

rationale: Roman patronage desecrates God's covenantal claim on the land.

conclusion: Jesus is revealed as a dangerous revolutionary and executed. The prestige and authority of the Judean elite is established.

However, Jesus changes the format to a qualitative progression argument, instead of a logical progression argument. Thereby he changes the terms and the metaphysical level of the answer — and poses more questions of his enemies instead of giving them predetermined answers that they want. The qualitative progression argument develops with both a stated and an unstated argument. The actual answer is in the unstated argument, but it is left to the actual reader to verbalise the answer. So, the qualitative progression argument mimics the predetermined argument of the spies in that it has two possible outcomes, but it changes the angle of the answer — and thereby avoid the trap. The stated qualitative progression argument runs like follows:

minor thesis: the image of Caesar is on a denarius

major thesis: whoever's image is on the denarius is the lord of the denarius

conclusion: give back to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar

The unstated qualitative progression argument runs in the same format and line as the stated argument — however it provides a contrast between the Kingdom of God and kingdom of Caesar. It is assumed here that they are different and contrasted from each other, and the stated and unstated qualitative argument provide the contrast:

minor thesis: the image of God is on humanity

major thesis: whoever's image is on humanity is the lord of humanity

conclusion: to give to God the things of God implies a strong moral and ethical foundation in how people are treated.

The inner texture therefore explores how Jesus turns the tables on the spies. The antagonism is built up in the passage by how God and Caesar is set up against each other, as well as the way the spies attempts to set Jesus up for the trap by flattery. However, the opening-middle-closing texture illustrates how the spies move from confidence to amazement as the tables are turned on them. The way the tables are turned on them is by shifting the type of argument from a logical progressive argument to a qualitative progressive argument. Thereby the discussion is moved from a socio-political sphere into a religio-ethical sphere.

When the inner texture is applied to the three possible lines of interpretation, it becomes difficult to find sufficient support in the text itself for the first two exegetical lines of interpretation (§ 6.6). To subscribe to the first two arguments is to follow the logical progressive argument of the spies — the argument leads to only two options: either political submission with a “two kingdoms view”, or rebellion against Roman patronage in the name of God. But these outcomes are expected (and welcomed by the spies and their patrons). Rather, Jesus turns the tables by using a qualitative progression argument and moves the discussion to ethical grounds. Here the actual reader is forced to reconsider his or her own position. In the process, “the image of God” in people becomes a strong critique against the cynical, endless and inhuman desire for money and resources. Jesus condemns them with their own question.

## 6.7 CONCLUSION

Bock (1994: Luke 20:20-26 [Logos edition]) highlights an important matter concerning the Question of Paying Tribute: “there are many points the passage does not discuss. What happens when there is a blatant moral conflict between the affairs of state and one’s union to God? The reply does not endorse a doctrine of separation of church and state, as if these were two totally distinct spheres. What it does suggest is that government, even a pagan government, has the right to exist and be supported by all its citizens”. The answer of Jesus does not advocate either extremes of a secular state (where religion is removed from the public arena) or a holy war (where religion is used as a justification for violence). Rather, it moves the conversation to the moral and ethical nature of the actions of the political elite. In this, Jesus follows the rich Jewish tradition of popular prophets that critiqued the rulers of the day, and exposes their lack of covenantal values that ideally shaped Jewish society.

Bock correctly points out the remaining difficulty of what would happen when there is a “blatant moral conflict between the affairs of state and one’s union to God”. The way Bock states the phrase, however, belies the way individualistic postmodern societies tend to read the Gospels. It is unlikely that Luke was solely focused on the individual’s responsibility to Caesar and to God. Rather the question spreads to larger communal issues of what type of society is pleasing to God, and what type of society is pleasing to Caesar. The passage itself does not attempt to answer what was the ultimate Lukan view of what should be done should a “blatant moral conflict develop”, but it does set an example of the responsibility of true descendants of Abraham to rise to be a prophetic voice concerning the “things of God”. It is the responsibility of the Jesus movement to critique the influence of political ideologies and the economic consequences in their respective communities. It is, after all, their obligation to give back the things of God. This does not mean that Lukan material does not present various strategies to answer such blatant conflict (which is part of the contention of this dissertation) — but simply that the passage suggests the first step. And the first step is to raise socio-political issues to a moral and ethical level in the tradition of the covenantal prophets, and thereby critiquing the ruling socio-political ideologies concerning the use of resources. As in the case of Luke 20:20–

26, this action holds the potential to bring “silence” among those who would abuse their power.

Luke 20:20–26 makes clear that the use of money and resources is a covenantal matter. The use of resources should stem from a covenantal understanding. In the background to this passage is the aphorisms and examples of the Jesus movement, which advocated radical positive reciprocity. This extraordinary generosity flowed from a covenantal understanding of the patronage of the Father who is pleased to confer a kingdom to the true descendants of Abraham. This radical generosity provided a stark contrast to the centralising economic policies of the Judean elite. The policies of the Judean and Roman elite largely contributed to a growing social disparity and need. It helped increasing social instability that led to the Jewish War and civil unrest in early Roman Palestine.

By asking the question in Luke 20:22, the Judean elite and their clients ironically let the genie out of the bottle. There is no hiding from the answer. Where they showed their underlying motive as primarily a political one (and especially that of political patronage); the Gospels authors depict the Jesus movement as motivated by covenantal ideals. The hypocrisy of the priestly elite was stunning in this regard. This question, other than what the Judean elite hoped for, revealed how patronage blinded them to their religious responsibilities — but it also highlighted how far the socio-political context moved from the covenantal ideals. The people of the Exodus has returned to Egypt; they became economic and political slaves once more.

The Lukan prophetic discourse twists the question in a surprising and subtle way. The question of socio-political realities is moved unto the ethical and moral ideals of the covenantal relationship of the Abrahamic covenant. Ultimately, and quite simply, the heart of God is for people. Those who wish to worship God, and those who acknowledge the God of Israel, should realise that the reciprocal obligation of the patronage of God is that people should be treated with justice, kindness and humility. Here Luke (and the other synoptic Gospels) portray Jesus in the best prophetic tradition. This answer was so important that subsequent Jesus communities and churches preserved it as best possible.

## CHAPTER 7: LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSE AND RELIGION IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

(Lk 1:69–75, NRSV)

I cried unto the Lord when I was in distress [ ], Unto God when sinners assailed. Suddenly the alarm of war was heard before me; (I said), He will hearken to me, for I am full of righteousness. I thought in my heart that I was full of righteousness, Because I was well off and had become rich in children. Their wealth spread to the whole earth, And their glory unto the end of the earth. They were exalted unto the stars; They said they would never fall. But they became insolent in their prosperity, And ...Their sins were in secret, And even I had no knowledge (of them). Their transgressions (went) beyond those of the heathen before them; They utterly polluted the holy things of the Lord.

(Pss. Sol. 1)

### 7.1 THE DEFINITION AND ROLE OF RELIGION

Early Roman Palestine, and indeed the historical traditions of Judea, were steeped in religion. Religion can be a broad and vague term, but for the purposes of this dissertation the definition of Fleming (2003:670) is a good starting point: "...religion is attention to God, who is the one governing force outside the natural world with which humanity must deal. More precisely, it is every facet of the relationship between God and his human creation". Religion may be practised and theorised in a myriad of ways, but essentially it includes the "whole range of activity and ideas that shape the

maintenance of the bond between God and his people”. Religion is an important social domain, because it describes and explores the ideological beliefs of people about God, and how those beliefs and practises eventually influence and shape society and community.

For Fenn (2003:6), religion is a way of “tying together multiple experiences and memories of the sacred into a single system of belief and practice”. This definition gives width to the scope of the religion. It is memories, experiences, and systems. It results in beliefs and practices. Fenn (like Fleming) puts the emphasis on the sacred. In both definitions, the way beliefs shape meaning, is important. That is because religion is ultimately a system of meaning — and provides meaning to ideas that shape a particular community or social group. This is exactly the point Malina (2001: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]) makes in exploring the connection between society and religion:

...religion deals with the overarching order of existence, with meaning; it is held together by influence; it provides reasons for what exists and the models that generate those reasons. Therefore, religion forms the meaning systems of a society and, as such, feeds back and forward into the kinship, economic, and political systems, unifying the whole by means of some explicit or implicit ideology.

Due to the embedded nature of social domains during that period (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]), it is virtually impossible to separate the religious influence from the other social domains. But the point that Malina is making, is that even if it was possible to extract the religious domain from other social domains (as per the secularism experiment), religion still remains as an ontological entity<sup>91</sup> for society at large. This is because religion has to do with, and tries to

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<sup>91</sup> McKinnon (2002:79–80) takes a more cautious note, and argues that religion is without essence. In other words, it has no observable ontological substance. Although McKinnon acknowledges the existence of religion, he warns that it is a social construct *per se*. That is to say, that outside of the discourse of religion, there is (objectively) no such things as religion. This is a non-essentialist definition of religion (there is no essence to religion). Rather, there are various traditions concerning religion (e.g. Christianity and Buddhism) that may be compared with each other, and with other religious traditions and forms.

describe, the ultimate reality of things. In the process, it prescribes a way of living. Religion generates systems of meaning, as well as unifying ideologies that feed into various social domains. Of course, all philosophical systems attempt to describe ultimate reality and its resultant consequences on society. And religion is no different as it grapples with God as a “governing force outside the natural world”. It is no wonder, as the introductory quotes from Luke and Psalms of Solomon suggest, that people appealed to God to alleviate social ills. In this sense, religion becomes an exceptionally powerful social force — and should be reckoned as a social force when a society is examined. If the presupposition is granted that God is the origin of all things (as per Judeo-Christian traditions), and God is the pinnacle of all things (“with which humanity must deal”); then religion is a supreme force that motivates and shapes human existence, both on an individual and communal level. Religion becomes an ontological bedrock on which other social phenomena are built.

## **7.2 COVENANT AND RELIGION AND EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

In order to examine the religious landscape, a brief examination of the concept of covenant is also necessary. Covenant is a central theological concept in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It plays a formative role in the historical and religious development of Judea. It is also a core component of this dissertation, which makes it very necessary to offer some definitions, as well as some remarks on the relevance of covenant within early Roman Palestine.

In its most basic form, covenant is “a relationship of ‘oaths and bonds’ and involves mutual, though not necessarily equal, commitments” (Horton 2006:10). In other words, like patronage, covenant is a reciprocal relationship. It may involve unequal parties (e.g. God and Israel) that enter an asymmetrical relationship (YHWH becomes the benefactor of Israel, and Israel becomes loyal towards YHWH). The

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McKinnon advocates that the application of religious definitions and concepts is of importance. It needs to be “useful, interesting, and illuminating for particular purposes”. Although McKinnon’s view is seen as too extreme here, the warnings of McKinnon is taken to heart. In order to have a “useful, interesting and illuminating” examination on the religious discourse of Luke, a particular, and limited, question is asked in this chapter. What is Luke’s perspective on religious authority? (§ 7.3).

relationship had an enduring element. On a cursory level, the overlap between patronage and covenant is significant, and may explain the encroachment of political patronage on religion (and also the use of patronage concepts in the Bible). But covenant especially came to embody the sovereign claim of God over Israel. In the giving of the Law at Sinai, God claims sovereignty “over all of life” (Horton 2006:26). For Horton, the pre-amble to the Ten Commandments embodies this principle of sovereignty: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:2–3, NRSV). The deliverance of Israel, and its resultant liberty, is due to the sovereignty of God. Therefore, God, his nature, and his commandments, has to rule over all of life. To do otherwise, is to break covenant.

This is still quite general, and the question is how was this very basic concept (and demand) of covenant perceived in early Judaism? Here the work of Wright is closely followed. According to Wright (1992:260), covenant remained a central concept in early Roman Palestine.<sup>92</sup> The basis of covenant was the promises made to the patriarchs. “Blessing” was a key covenantal promise, resulting in Land and prosperity. These promises providentially led to the emancipation of Israel from Egypt, and the entrance to the Promised Land. Divine providence (blessing) was to sustain Israel from generation to generation. However, Wright argues that there were deeper elements to the perception of covenant in first century Judaism. Covenant meant that Israel perceived herself to be the “true humanity” (Wright 1992:262). It was thought that the covenant of Abraham dealt with the problem of Adam. If the vocation, and the blessing, of humanity was lost by means of the sin of Adam, then it is recovered by the promises made to Abraham. The covenant of Abraham is the solution to the plight of humanity. And since Israel were the descendants and heirs of Abraham, Israel held the key to the fortunes of the whole world. Therefore, the providential hand of God was upon Israel, delivering her from her enemies, gracing her with the Temple, and guiding her through judges, kings and prophets. Israel is

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<sup>92</sup> For Borg (2006:95), the position of first century Judaism on covenant can be called “covenantal nomism” (after Sanders [1992]). Nomism implies “rule”, “order” or “law”. Such a view held the conviction that “God had chosen Israel and that Israel had agreed to live in accord with God’s covenant”.

the true people of God, and therefore a blessing to the whole world (Wright 1992:264).

This social identity is immense in its scope, but surely also crushing in its weight. Should Israel be the true humanity, her conduct should reflect that status. Here the issue of covenantal justice and faithfulness comes to the fore. A high ethical standard is required of Israel, and this ethical standard shapes and sustains communal life. It is expressed in moral conduct and justice. “For those who, because of unfaithfulness and sinfulness, forfeited their enjoyment of covenant blessings and so found themselves exiled, the only way to revive their covenant participation was through repentance. The covenant itself generated and shaped a community that lived according to its ethical standards (cf. Luke 12:32)” (McKnight 1999:110).

In summary: the centrality of covenant runs throughout this dissertation. So too does the dichotomy between the ideal of high ethical covenantal standards on a societal level, and the social realities of early Roman Palestine. Furthermore, a strong covenantal underpinning is explored in connection with Lukan prophetic discourses — especially in relation to the traditions of Abraham (§ 8.3).

### **7.3 THE ROLE OF SCRIBAL TRADITIONS IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

There are more available textual sources that describe the overall religious ideologies in early Roman Palestine. Here the scribal traditions of the period play an important role. These scribal traditions were likely developed because political and religious institutions increased in size in the Second Temple period. This made space for professional intellectuals who served in various positions and capacities (Horsley 2007:71). These roles probably ranged from low importance (copying documents and taking dictation), to serving as advisors and experts on legal matters. On higher levels, advisors would exhibit mastery over religious, historical and legal matters — and therefore formed a core group of intellectuals who served at the pleasure of the Judean priestly aristocracy (Horsley 2010a:2–3). Whether of low or high ranking importance, the scribes were of the very few literates in early Roman Palestine, and therefore had a core skill set that ensured that they were part of the retainer class of the Judean elite. What that means is that the members of the

retainer class served as part of the fictive household of the elite (and therefore were likely to be under the social convention, and obligations, of patronage).

The impression may exist that the scribes were of a particular theological persuasion, but they were defined primarily by their professional skill set — not their theological persuasion. It is possible that members of the scribes belonged to a variety of social sects in early Roman Palestine. Even more so, it is foreseeable that their position as retainers made for a very difficult moral position. The reasoning for this is as follows: as clients of the Judean political elite, many of the scribes were dependent on the benefaction of the elite.<sup>93</sup> The scribes assisted the elite, and served them in various positions — and yet they were only fictive kin of the elite. They did not truly belong with the elite. On the other hand, they served as the curators of the traditions and historical legacy of Israel. The central role of Ben Sira<sup>94</sup> as an idealised instructor to the scribes is illuminating, and gives an indication of the social location of the scribes (Horsley 2010a:9). The document referred to as Ben Sira dates from 200–175 BCE (Corley 2003:271), and sets the tone as an early example of what it meant to be a scribe. For Ben Sira, the most important quality of a scribe was not the social and intellectual requirements of such a role — but the moral qualities of a scribe. Scribes had, above all, the duty to act as guardians of the covenant in the fear of the Lord.<sup>95</sup> This dual role as client servants of the Judean

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<sup>93</sup> It should be noted that at least some of the scribes already belonged to the elite class (Twelftree 2000:1086). But of course, many did not — and the argument here is that those who were not part of the elite would have felt the social chasm between the elite and non-elite more acutely.

<sup>94</sup> Joshua Ben Eleazar Ben Sira was a scribe who lived and taught in Jerusalem during the second century BCE (the first quarter of that century). He collected his work in a volume and named it after himself. It is available today via the Greek translation (from Hebrew) supposedly made by his grandson. The text is similar to Proverbs as wisdom literature, with some significant differences. In it, Ben Sira provides insight into his role and function as a high-level scribe, he gives ethical instruction particular to his field of work, and especially comments on the social and intellectual properties on Judaism in the face of Hellenism in Second Temple Judaism (Nickelsburg 2005:53–55).

<sup>95</sup> “He seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients, and is concerned with prophecies; he preserves the sayings of the famous and penetrates the subtleties of parables; he seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs and is at home with the obscurities of parables. He serves among the great and appears before rulers; he travels in foreign lands and learns what is good and evil in the human lot. He sets his heart to rise early to seek the Lord who made him, and to petition the Most High; he opens his mouth in prayer and asks pardon for his

elite, as well as guardians of the covenantal traditions of Israel, placed the scribes into the *de facto* position of being commentators on the social climate of early Roman Palestine. And it may be in that particular role that they produced many of the texts of that period (Horsley 2010a:8–9). Their proximity to the elite, and to the plight of the non-elite,<sup>96</sup> put them in a unique position (Horsley 2010a:9). Did they sympathise with the elite (as their patrons), or with the non-elite (who was suffering in the process)?

It is in the examination of the scribal texts of early Roman Palestine, as well as the archaeological data stemming from this period time, that insight into the scribal theological approach of the day can be gained. In this regard, broadly two theological views can be extrapolated: in the first place, personal piety extended worship from cultic spaces into the household; and the development of eschatological expectations expressed a hope of divine deliverance from foreign oppressors.

### 7.3.1 PERSONAL PIETY AND HOUSEHOLD JUDAISM

#### 7.3.1.1 Psalms of Solomon

The Psalms of Solomon is a compilation of eighteen psalms written in Hebrew in the first century BCE (Lattke 2000; Nickelsburg 2005:238). The Psalms of Solomon reflect on the social changes due to the political encroachment of the Roman empire. It has been speculated that both Psalm 2 and 8 contain veiled references to Pompey, who inducted the region into the Roman empire. Furthermore, Psalm of Solomon 17 may refer to the siege of Jerusalem — either by Pompey or by Herod in 37 BCE (Atkinson 1996:314). The Psalms become an early response on the evolving Roman influence (Horsley 2010a:143). The Psalms were written from a position of

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sins. If the great Lord is willing, he will be filled with the spirit of understanding; he will pour forth words of wisdom of his own and give thanks to the Lord in prayer” (*Sir* 39:1–6, NRSV).

<sup>96</sup> For example, the injunction of Ben Sira of how the poor ought to be treated, indicates an awareness of the plight of the poor: “Nevertheless, be patient with someone in humble circumstances, and do not keep him waiting for your alms. Help the poor for the commandment’s sake, and in their need do not send them away empty-handed” (*Sir* 29:8–9, NRSV).

“distress” when “the alarm of war was heard before me” (*Pss. Sol.* 1:1). Although it is the traditional view that the city Jerusalem takes the position of first person in this Psalm (Nickelsburg 2005:238); it is not hard to hear the dismayed voices of the scribes through the implied voice of Jerusalem.

In the Psalms, the authors self-identify as the “pious” and the “righteous” (Charles 1913:628). It is up to the righteous and pious to comment on the state of society under the growing Roman influence. In so doing, they divide Judea and Galilee into two fundamental groups. These groups are religious categories, namely the pious and the unrighteous. Already the nomenclature of these two groups indicates an advocacy for personal piety. There is a longing in the Psalms for the return of the glory of the Temple under the Davidic house — hence the use of the pseudonym of “Solomon”. The Psalms holds a clear expectation of deliverance:

Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time in which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel Thy servant. And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, And that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction.

*(Pss. Sol.* 17:23–25)

But equally the authors of Solomon argue that the hardships that Jerusalem is enduring, are punishment for personal sin. Here, Psalm 8 describes this particular presupposition the best:

God laid bare their sins in the full light of day; All the earth came to know the righteous judgements of God. In secret places underground their iniquities (were committed) to provoke (Him) to anger; They wrought confusion, son with mother and father with daughter; They committed adultery, every man with his neighbour’s wife. They concluded covenants with one another with an oath touching these things; They plundered the sanctuary of God, as though there was no avenger.

*(Pss. Sol.* 8:8–12)

In the expectation of this deliverance, a life of piety is to be encouraged. This piety is not just on a societal level, but also on a personal one: “For the judgements of the Lord are (given) in righteousness to (every) man and (his) house” (*Pss. Sol.* 9:10). The result of this personal piety is life and prosperity. The Psalms invoke a cause-effect relationship with the Law: each will receive what is due to him or her, on the basis of faithfulness to the Law. To live in personal piety is to ensure blessing and prosperity on both a personal and corporate level, but to live in sin is to ensure societal downfall and judgment.

### 7.3.1.2 The Testament of Moses

Another pseudepigraphical example of personal piety is the Testament of Moses (also called the Assumption of Moses). It is suggested that it was written after the devastating campaign of Varus in 4 BCE (Collins 1973:30),<sup>97</sup> or that Chapters 6 and 7 were added as a later update in the first century CE (Horsley 2010a:159). The Testament is loosely based in the narrative of Israel’s benediction by Moses in Deuteronomy 31–34 (Nickelsburg 2005:74). The narrative has Moses retelling the history of Israel, as well as transferring leadership over to Joshua — with some parting instructions. The narrative is used as a template to comment on the challenges that early Roman Palestine faces. Insights are provided by secret prophecies which were to be safeguarded for revelation at an opportune time — and the implication is that the secret prophecies were kept for the time such as then. By referring to Moses, a key covenantal figure of Israel is invoked to deliver a particular religious vision of an ideal Judean society.

The text builds on the primary ideas of Deuteronomy as well. The key narrative and theological cycle of sin, punishment, repentance and salvation is repeated in the Testament of Moses (Nickelsburg 2005:75). The text places the blame for the societal ills of Judea squarely on the Judean elite (*T. Mos.* 6 & 7). The elite have forgotten their mandate from God, and has become corrupt:

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<sup>97</sup> Nickelsburg (2005:74) argues that the Testament of Moses was written in its original form during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, but updated to its present form to address the particular concerns of Judea in early Roman Palestine.

And, in the time of these, destructive and impious men shall rule, saying that they are just. And these shall stir up the poison of their minds, being treacherous men, self-pleasers, dissemblers in all their own affairs and lovers of banquets at every hour of the day, gluttons, gourmands... Devourers of the goods of the (poor) saying that they do so on the ground of their justice, but in reality to destroy them, complainers, deceitful, concealing themselves lest they should be recognized, impious, filled with lawlessness and iniquity from sunrise to sunset ...

(*T. Mos. 7:3–7*)

The most acerbic commentary is left for the Herodian rulers (Horsley 2010a:160). Here Herod is cast into the archetype of Pharaoh — who oppressed the people of God in the Exodus narrative — and is now likewise oppressing the people of God:

And an insolent king shall succeed them, who will not be of the race of the priests, a man bold and shameless, and he shall judge them as they shall deserve. And he shall cut off their chief men with the sword, and shall destroy them in secret places, so that no one may know where their bodies are. He shall slay the old and the young, and he shall not spare. Then the fear of him shall be bitter unto them in their land. And he shall execute judgements on them as the Egyptians executed upon them, during thirty and four years, and he shall punish them.

(*T. Mos. 6:2–6*)

Whereas the authors of the Psalms of Solomon are in a state of mourning, the Testament of Moses conveys a sense of despair and pessimism. In Testament of Moses 9, Taxo, a Levite figure, tells his sons to remove themselves from Judean society and rather form a separate community in the wilderness. Here they could freely practise righteousness apart from the corruption and compromise of the Judean priestly elite. Again the central theological thought here is that the societal condition of early Roman Palestine is brought about by sin; and the solution is to seek personal piety in the face of this unrighteousness. So although the theological

drive for personal piety is more introversionist than in the Psalms of Solomon, personal piety is still a broad theological track of the Testament of Moses.

### **7.3.1.3 Archaeological data of household Judaism**

This increased emphasis of personal piety in early Roman Palestine (as opposed to the emphasis on a corporate and societal piety) has been dubbed “household Judaism” by Berlin (2005:466). Berlin uses this nomenclature to categorise the archaeological data that reflect the Jewish cultic use of objects in homes in early Roman Palestine. According to Berlin, artefacts from this period indicate a desire to extend the pious into their daily lives. This does not mean that the focus has moved away from public cultic spaces such as the Temple; rather, that the practice of elements of the Jewish cultic worship has been extended towards the household. Here archaeological data gives a strong supportive voice that personal piety was central during this period of time. Three categories of material data underline this practice, namely: the use of stone vessels, ritual baths, and stone ossuaries. None of these items were a direct product of Levitical stipulations (or the subsequent legal rulings of the Second Temple period). They rather reflected a “broad desire for material possessions that would encode and reflect religious identity” (Berlin 2005:467).

Stone vessels of various sizes (and for various usages) have been recovered from sites. Although items made from stone would have been expensive (due to the difficulty of using the material), stone items have been found both in peasantry homesteads and the elite dwellings. Sixteen such workshops have been uncovered — mostly around Jerusalem (Berlin 2005:429). The appeal of stone was that it was deemed impervious to ritual impurity, hence it improved the ritual standing of the household as pure. It is not sure how these items were used, but it held a distinct advantage over pottery utensils, since items of pottery either had to be destroyed or ritually purified to keep its status as pure (Chancey & Meyer 2000:25). This illustrates how the concerns for ritual purity and washing in the Temple precinct were extended to households in early Roman Palestine.

Ritual baths (*mikva'ot*) first appeared mid-first century BCE. The earliest artefacts of ritual baths have been uncovered in the Hasmonean palaces in Jericho, the Upper City of Jerusalem (areas A and E), Khirbet Qumrân, villages at Gezer and Gamla, as well as in Gaulanitis (Berlin 2005:452). It was in common use by the first century CE. Discoveries of these ritual baths are so numerous (but also unique among Jewish communities) that the archaeological remains of ritual baths are used as an ethnic marker to identify Jewish settlements (Chancey & Meyers 2000:25). Ritual baths were deep basins that contained steps — and held water expressly for the use of ritual immersion and purification. In poorer communities, these baths were used communally, but among the wealthy, remains of these baths have been found in homes — where they were probably used privately.

Stone ossuaries also indicate this concern for personal piety and ritual purity. A stone ossuary is a stone box that was used to keep the skeletal remains of a deceased after decay. At the end of twelve months after death, the skeletal remains were placed in the box and left in the family tomb (Rahmani 1982:109–111). The idea behind the stone ossuaries was that stone was impervious to ritual impurity. After the decay of the flesh (which symbolised the expiation of the sin of the individual), the bones were left in good ritual standing and purity for the day of resurrection. Here again the concept of personal piety is underlined — and extends even beyond death.<sup>98</sup>

### 7.3.2 COSMIC CONFLICT AND ESCHATOLOGY IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

The second theological emphasis in scribal texts from this period is an eschatological outlook. Much has been written in this regard, and the subject itself presents multiple complexities. In discussing the issue of eschatology, a distinction

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<sup>98</sup> There is a question mark over this interpretation, since stone ossuaries have been uncovered in the graves of the political elite (including Sadducees who did not subscribe to the belief of the resurrection). Crossan and Reed (2001:281–282) take the view that the use of stone ossuaries indicate a separation of Jewish ethnic identity from Roman and Hellenistic values — even in death. The political elite would have used it (at the very least) as a way of saying that they subscribed to what they viewed as a pure Judaism. But even if this interpretation of ethnic and cultural separation is accepted, it still points to a form of ritual purity, even should it not indicate a belief system regarding resurrection.

has to be made between apocalyptic genres, apocalyptic eschatology and an apocalyptic worldview (Collins 1984:2). These elements can complicate the discussion of what is exactly meant by eschatology in early Roman Palestine, and how the modern reader may make sense of it. But at the very core of it is the idea that somehow the world is more mysterious, with more forces at play within it, than meets the eye: there are supernatural, otherworldly forces at work that influence the world as it is. Perhaps the modern reading of eschatology as the “end of the world”<sup>99</sup> has influenced reading of potential apocalyptic texts too much. This tends to overpower the main implication within such genres of work; namely, that there is a larger cosmic conflict that looms between supernatural forces. These supernatural forces have a very real effect on the material world. This leads to the apocalyptic worldview that states that the world is so mysterious that supernatural and otherworldly entities have to reveal the true nature of the world to humanity (Rowland 2010). In the apocalyptic genre a human recipient is guided by otherworldly figures (often angels) into the transcendent realities that influences space and time. These revelations address the inexplicable suffering of people, and give insight into the divine intervention that can be expected to change the status quo (apocalyptic eschatology). The popular appeal of this theological view is that it gives a cause for suffering (a cosmic battle between supernatural forces), and creates an expectation of hope (through divine deliverance).

Although both personal piety and eschatological expectations find its foundation in the covenantal traditions of Israel — and although these two theological tracks are far more intertwined and fluid than presented here — the emphasis, solutions, and programme presented in both are somewhat different. Some scribal traditions advocated personal piety as a covenantal cause-and-effect philosophy. The righteous will inevitably be vindicated and prosper; the wicked will inevitably falter and be judged. The righteous or evil seed (Mt 13:37–43), once sown, will grow and bear fruit. However, with the cosmic battle of eschatology, the present is a bit more unpredictable. Who can predict the ebb and flow of a cosmic struggle? The best the

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<sup>99</sup> Also called a cosmic eschatology. “In the Jewish apocalypses, cosmic eschatology usually complements and completes the traditional political eschatology” (Collins 2000:332). Political eschatology is the hope that a lasting political deliverance and order would be established.

reader can do is to prepare himself or herself for a coming divine intervention, and make sure that when it occurs, they are on the right side (Lk 21:19). This divine intervention may come in many forms, such as a cosmic battle or final judgment. But faithfulness is essential.

### 7.3.2.1 The Parables of Enoch

The Parables of Enoch (or Similitudes of Enoch) is the second of the booklets that makes up the book of Enoch. The Parables date later than the other booklets of Enoch. Collins (1984:178) dates the Parables to just before 70 CE. Enoch was a popular pseudonym for apocalyptic writings, since he was seen to walk with God (or angels) in Genesis 5:21–24. The mysterious nature of his death (“God took him”, Gen 5:24, NRSV) made the mystical possibilities tantalising for authors. The Parables contain an introduction and conclusion, with three parables in between. In it, Enoch is guided through the heavens, and the absolute sovereignty of God is revealed to him by what he observes in the heavens (1 *En.* 38:1–44). The second parable (1 *En.* 45–57:3) explores the destiny of people who deny the power of God. They are left homeless in neither the heaven nor the earth (1 *En.* 45:2). In the third parable (1 *En.* 58–69:29), the final resting place of the righteous is revealed. They enter a state of eternal blessedness. Other items included in the third parable are phenomena such as the Son of Man, and the judgment of angels.

Central to the Parables of Enoch is the concept of judgment. On the one side are God and his angelic entourage. God has agents of judgment, which includes angels, the Chosen One, as well as the righteous elect. On the other side of this cosmic struggle is the chief demon Azazel, his angels, and people who serve him (such as unrighteous kings). The socio-political struggles and suffering on earth is therefore not merely the geo-political actions of nations against each other — but it also has a dualistic tone as the supernatural gear up for a struggle against each other through their human proxies on earth. The solution to this dualistic war is judgment by God. 1 Enoch 38:1–2 sets the tone of the coming judgment:

When the congregation of the righteous shall appear,  
And sinners shall be judged for their sins,

And shall be driven from the face of the earth:  
And when the Righteous One shall appear before the eyes of the  
righteous,  
Whose elect works hang upon the Lord of Spirits,  
And light shall appear to the righteous and the elect who dwell on the  
earth,  
Where then will be the dwelling of the sinners,  
And where the resting-place of those who have denied the Lord of Spirits?  
It had been good for them if they had not been born.

The longing for justice will not be left unanswered, and justice will take on cosmic and eternal dimensions.

### **7.3.2.2 The War Scroll**

The War Scroll was probably written in the first quarter of the first century CE (Schultz 2009:31). The War Scroll was discovered among the Dead Sea scrolls in Cave 1 and 4 in 1947 (Collins 1984:166). It consists of nineteen columns of text, and most of it is intact.

The War Scroll escalates the cosmic struggle of mysterious supernatural forces to an out-and-out eschatological war. The full title of the War Scrolls is “The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness” (Nickelsburg 2005:143). Here the opportunity for change (or repentance) is over. Only war is possible. The supernatural forces are now embodied in their “children” who become their proxies, and people are either children of light or children of darkness. “From the outset, in the introductory paragraph (1:1–7), the author identifies the war of the end time as a clash between cosmic powers whose activity is embodied in human agents” (Nickelsburg 2005:143).

Also, the defensive mode of the righteous (which is often implied in other texts of the same period) is changed into an attacking mind set. The sons of light will launch an attack on the army of the arch demon Belial. The usual virtue of patience and faithfulness under persecution has no place here. By participating in the cosmic

struggle, injustices and suffering on earth will come to an end. This means that war is a welcomed event. In the process the dualism between the material and supernatural is narrowed, and what happens in the supernatural is reflected on earth (and *vice versa*). The “assembly of the gods and the congregation of men shall confront each other for great destruction” (Column 1:10). This war shall break the hegemony of the *Kittim* (Column 1:7). The *Kittim* here is accepted to refer to the Gentiles,<sup>100</sup> in this case the Romans and surrounding nations antagonistic to Israel (Horsley 2010a:135). The Roman oppression is not presented as punishment for the sins of Judea, but as a demonic inspired force. This explains the move from the attitude of endurance (since they are punished for their sins) to active resistance. One does not negotiate with a demonic force. The complexities of sin and unrighteousness are removed, and the simplicity of the struggle between evil and good supernatural forces explains societal breakdown. It becomes a holy war.

This holy war is divided into seven stages, and the children of light only overcome in the last three stages. They are forced into retreat during the first three stages. Only in the last battle does God give the final victory (Column 1:13–15). The battle is to last a symbolic laden forty years. The difficulty of the war demands adequate preparation. This is the focal point of Column 2. Here, details are given on the ritualistic nature of the war. Examples include words that should be inscribed on the trumpets, and slogans that should be placed on banners (cf. Num 2:2; 17:23). Battle formations are given in Column 5. Battle towers are named after archangels in Column 9. Hymns and blessings are given to invoke during battles. The ritual nature of the preparation reminds of the central value given to the sacerdotal — and the role of priests (Collins 1984:166–167).

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<sup>100</sup> “The *Kittim* are descendants of Javan, grandson of Noah through Japheth, according to the Table of Nations (Gen 10:4; 1 Chr 1:7). They are associated with peoples from the region of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean” (Baker 1992:93). The problem here is who the *Kittim* refer to? This is important since the War Scroll advocates for war against the *Kittim*. Dating the various traditions that compile the War Scroll is notoriously hard, even impossible, but Collins (2005:170) dates the dualistic frame of the scroll and the tradition of the forty-year war in the middle of the first century BCE. It is argued here that the *Kittim* in the War Scroll refers to the Romans, since dating of the scrolls likely places it within early Roman Palestine. Furthermore, Horsley (2010a: 135) argues that other Dead Sea scrolls also directly infer to the Roman through descriptions like: “They sacrifice to their standards and worship their weapons of war” (1 *QpHab* 6:5–6).

### 7.3.2.3 Archaeological remains of apocalyptic communities

The War Scroll and other texts from the Qumran community<sup>101</sup> embody the values that this community pursued. The archaeological remains indicate that those who lived in the community sought an introversionist existence. An introversionist community believes that the world is irredeemably evil, and that the only response possible is to withdraw from it (Robbins 1996a:73). In withdrawing from the broader society, an opportunity arises to pursue purity fully, both as a contrast to the existing society, but also as an example of how an ideal society should look like from the group's perspective (Robbins 1996a:73). Archaeological remains depict this separation of profane and sacred. The elaborate installation of water systems provided ritually pure water for ritual washing and bathing. Buildings discovered were allocated to the study of scriptures, and copying and transmitting texts. Burial sites were carefully placed to separate genders to ensure ritual purity. According to Grabbe (2010:89) this community did not only relay the essence of a covenantal community, but also that of an eschatological community. This emphasis on separation (or holiness) was not just for purity, but also as preparation for the *eschaton*.

### 7.3.3 THE COVENANTAL EMPHASIS IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant were theological forces that provided social cohesion and solidarity. The very nature of covenant was seen as social and communal: in the Abrahamic covenant, Israel became a larger family. They were all kin in Abraham, and they were all part of the household of God. This had socio-political implications about the kind of society Israel ought to be. Clearly this was an idealistic reading of what Israel could be, and the socio-political realities of early Roman Palestine still stood in stark contrast to covenantal solidarity. Nevertheless, a

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<sup>101</sup> There is some disagreement concerning the link between the War Scroll and the Qumran community. Although the scroll has been found among other texts of the community, the war-like posed and the supposed quietist stance of the Essenes does not quite compute. But according to Collins (2005:170), their quietism did not necessarily mean a stance of absolute pacifism.

social and communal intent existed behind the Abrahamic covenant. The same was true of the Mosaic covenant. Here Israel became the chosen nation of God. They are special because they have been chosen by God and because they worship God. The covenant becomes an expression of loyalty to the supreme monarchy of God. Ritual, communal and legal laws, were given as an expression of the holiness of God. All things (including people and resources) belong to God and therefore all needed to be used in accordance to the nature of God. Justice became a theological matter as well, since the formulation and exercise thereof should reflect the nature of God. Israel was to become a just and holy nation — kings and priests unto God, a blessing and example to other nations.

The two scribal tracks of personal piety and eschatological expectations circumscribed this central, corporate, and societal aspect of covenant. In personal piety, religion became a more private, family matter. Cultic purity was extended beyond the public cultic space. There was a desire to incorporate it in the daily lives of people. Archaeological data indicates that artefacts embodied this personal piety — even in households. Personal piety expressed an unshakable belief in the justice expressed in the Law. The just will be rewarded, and the wicked punished. By pursuing personal piety, individuals tried to ensure personal well-being, but also the well-being of the broader community. Piety was sure to invoke the blessing of God on the nation. The eschatological track became a more separatist and introversionist cause. The eschatological view clung unto mystical explanations of the socio-political environment. Early Roman Palestine was involved in a larger cosmic and supernatural struggle. To challenge was to remain faithful, or to actively participate in this supernatural struggle. God was sure to deliver Israel.

Both scribal theological tracks invoked covenantal aspects. Personal piety invoked the covenantal loyalty of God in rewarding the just, and punishing the wicked. Eschatological expectations were based on the covenantal loyalty of God to deliver Israel from her enemies. But neither scribal theological track provided a strong cohesive power to rally a larger cause for societal change. Both, in effect, undercut the communal aspect of covenantal theology. Covenantal theology was the foundation of nation building. Rather, the scribal traditions tended to advocate a theology of withdrawal into personal piety, and into separate introversionist

communities. This was in contrast with the prime social power of the covenants — which was seen as causative for the founding of Israel under Abraham, the formation of Israel under Moses, and the political growth of Israel under the house of David. It was strong enough to cause large-scale societal reform under Nehemiah, and when ignored (as in the case of prophetic call of Jeremiah) it was the cause of the downfall of the nation.<sup>102</sup>

Covenantal theology is also important to the Gospel authors. Bock (2012:414–415) elevates the concept of covenant as one of the five central Scriptural themes in Luke. Already, in the beginning of Luke, the founding covenants are mentioned. In Luke 1:54–55 the Abrahamic covenant is invoked, and in Luke 1:68–69, the Davidic covenant. In Luke 1:31–33 (NRSV), Jesus is described as “...great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end”. Luke anticipates the ministry of Jesus through the prophetic blessing of Zechariah during the dedication of Jesus:

He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us.

(Lk 1:69–73, NRSV).

Here the “savior” as that was “spoken” of through the prophets would “save” Israel from its enemies — all because God “remembered his holy covenant”. Covenant is

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<sup>102</sup> This should be carefully stated, since the argument here is not that covenantal theology was removed from the religious thought of the elite and the non-elite in early Roman Palestine. Rather it is argued that the communal aspect of covenant was unintentionally undermined by the elevation of personal piety and eschatological expectation. Covenantal theology seemed to move from an overtly public arena, to the more private one of households and communities. It is argued here that these developments prevented covenantal theology from addressing the pressing socio-political issues in early Roman Palestine.

also a main feature of the Last Supper. Here Luke presents the very action of this event as a covenantal one.<sup>103</sup> The link between “kingdom”, covenantal meals (bread and wine), previous covenants (Passover) and a “new covenant” is strongly stated in the passage.

But the Gospels appear to position covenant in the public arena. For example; the Gospels link the covenants and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God closely (Lk 4:18–19). Proclamation by its very definition made this a very public act by the Jesus movement — and not a private or introversionist one.

#### **7.4 SUMMARY OF RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

The scribal traditions of early Roman Palestine struggle with the suffering and humiliating position of the people of God. There was a significant theological tension that had to be solved: if Judea is the covenantal people of God, then why are they subjugated and ruled by the wicked (Wright 1992:268)?<sup>104</sup> Broadly two explanations were offered by personal piety and an eschatological worldview: in the track of personal piety, the main explanation was that God was covenantally faithful, but his people were not. They were reaping suffering, where they sowed unrighteousness. The other track of eschatological expectation dictated that all was not as it seemed. There were more at work than the geopolitical movements of empires. A greater spiritual battle was raging, and the people of Israel were suffering in the midst of this battle. But evil supernatural forces, and its human proxies, would be brought to

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<sup>103</sup> “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God”. Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes”. 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”. 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” (Lk 22:15–20, NRSV).

<sup>104</sup> The solution proposed by Wright (1992:268–271) to this theological dilemma is that Israel was still in exile. The work that started with Ezra and Nehemiah was not done. Israel still suffered, and was still oppressed, because she was still in exile. According to this solution, an eschatological view followed closely on a covenantal line of thinking: Israel was still in exile, but God was still faithful to the Abrahamic promises. Hence Israel will be delivered, and returned from exile.

justice. It is argued here that both theological tracks contributed to the problem of social conflict. These two tracks actually undermined the public covenantal underpinning of early Roman Palestine. The covenants were corporate and social in nature, and excelled in nation building. Personal piety and eschatological expectations, by their very nature, discouraged a broader vision, and focused on sectarian and personal aspects of religion. This was a problem when social conflict is considered, since social cohesion is dependent on a vision that overcomes the divides between the social groups involved. And the covenants were able to provide that cohesion in days gone by.

When the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013 — see Addendum A) is considered, elite Judean ideology followed a hierarchy of socio-political prioritisation (§ 3.4.1). Politics was the most influential domain, followed by culture, then economics and lastly religion. This line of prioritisation reflects the impact of patronage on the Judean elite, as well as the economic extractive policies of the Roman empire. In these political realities, the cultural importance of the Temple became a source of legitimisation of the Judean elite's position among the local population (§ 5.2). This model places the social domain of religion last for the elite, simply because this particular theological motivation was overshadowed by the realities of Roman patronage and economic extraction (Garland 2012:783).

This does not mean that the elite became less religious. The Judean elite was mostly the priestly elite as well, and archaeological data of the Upper City indicates that religion was a very important aspect of their daily lives.<sup>105</sup> But it is likely that for the priestly elite, religious ideology centred on the sacerdotal function and theology of priesthood. The arguments for this assumption are as follows: the central role of the Temple, and the central role of the priestly elite in the Temple, were based on a sacerdotal cult. The office and function of the priestly elite was a central part of the Temple — and the Temple was a central political, religious, and cultural institution in

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<sup>105</sup> Such data include the obedience of the religious laws of aniconography, the use of ritual baths, stone utensils and stone ossuaries (Crossan & Reed 2001:244–249).

early Roman Palestine. The Judean political elite and priestly elite were mostly the same group (with possibly the exception of the Herodians). So it is hard to imagine that the sacerdotal nature of the elite and their priesthood would not be a core ideological matter to this group.

Furthermore, there was a connection between the Sadducees and the priestly elite. This may not mean that all the elite were part of the Sadducees, but it has been suggested that the members of the Sadducees mostly came from the Judean elite (Sanders 1992:318).<sup>106</sup> Why this is important is because the Sadducees placed a high premium on the Pentateuch as guiding and normative texts (Stemberger 2010:1181). And the Pentateuch contains a strong focus on the priestly and sacerdotal nature of Judaism. Lastly, the gradual change from cultic Judaism to rabbinical Judaism after the fall of the Second Temple suggests that the priestly elite were increasingly marginalised in the further development of Judaism (Sanders 1992:318; Strauss 2013:826). The development of rabbinic Judaism suggests that the elite had no further innovative religious ideologies (beyond the sacerdotal) to contribute to the discussion. What's more, the sacerdotal nature of Judaism was hampered due to the destruction of the Second Temple. What the model does suggest then, is that political and economic realities dominated the decision making process of the Judean elite, whereas religious concerns did not.

In contrast, the scribal texts of the day do not hesitate to criticise the elite, and do not seem to self-identify as truly part of the elite. The Gospels also echo a history from below (from the non-elite point of view). The Gospels depict the concept of covenant as central to the non-elite. This is reflected in the model (Jacobs 2013) by how the line of socio-political prioritisation follows a hierarchy of religion, then the economic domain, then culture and finally politics. In other words, among the non-elite, covenant remained the foundational philosophy of the formation of Israel. In all these social domains, a covenantal element may be ascribed to non-elite ideologies:

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<sup>106</sup> Sanders (1992:318) based this assumption on the following: Josephus claims that the Sadducean doctrine was only given to “few males” who were “foremost in worthiness” (*Ant.* 18.1). This implies an elite membership. Josephus only names one Sadducee, namely Ananus, who were part of the priestly elite. Acts 5:17 links the high priest, Caiaphas, with the Sadducees. The etymology of the name Sadducee seems to come from Zadok — which would imply an elite lineage.

economic distribution (or general and positive reciprocity) was seen as an expression of the covenantal justice. In the domain of culture, earlier covenantal traditions such as the Patriarchs, the Exodus and the establishment of the house of David were invoked (§ 5.3). For politics, there seemed to be some expectation of a messiah — who by definition was to be a political and covenantal leader. The question is then how the Jesus movement related to this, and how it compared with the other scribal traditions of the time.

Luke 20:1–19 presents a good example of how Lukan prophetic discourse critiques elite religious ideology. The question posed in the narrative is what gave Jesus the right to act and to teach as he did — what was the source of his religious authority? According to the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013 — Addendum A), the predicted answer would follow either the line of being part of the priestly elite who were in charge by heritage, or to follow the covenantal line of reasoning inherent to the non-elite religious ideology. It is proposed here that the Lukan version follows an adjusted form of covenantal theology. It is covenantal because Jesus lays claim to a special relationship with God that granted him authority. But it is adjusted because his claim to covenant is primarily charismatic, and not traditional. In other words, authority was usually (but not exclusively) given because God has a special historical relationship with the nation of Israel corporately — not because of a personal relationship and a prophetic revelation of God (Fitzmeyer 2008:1273–1274). But the key point of the examined pericope is that the societal function of religion is to provide (or examine) a basis for authority. The societal role of religion is to critique the basis of authority and the use of power. It has a prophetic role to speak truth to power. The exercise of political and economic power has to be explained and justified in moral terms — which is exactly where the religious domain excels.

## **7.5 THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY AND RELIGION IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and telling the good news, the chief priests and the scribes came with the elders and said to him, “Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who

gave you this authority?” He answered them, “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” They discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet”. So they answered that they did not know where it came from. Then Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things”. He began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, and leased it to tenants, and went to another country for a long time. When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants in order that they might give him his share of the produce of the vineyard; but the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Next he sent another slave; that one also they beat and insulted and sent away empty-handed. And he sent still a third; this one also they wounded and threw out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ But when the tenants saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance may be ours.’ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others”. When they heard this, they said, “Heaven forbid!” But he looked at them and said, “What then does this text mean: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls”. When the scribes and chief priests realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to lay hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people.

(Lk 20:1–19, NRSV)

Central to Luke 20:1–19 is the issue of authority (Green 1997:700). According to the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013), religious authority would be connected with priesthood. The “chief priests” had authority based on a static, institutional position as the elite priests (Green 1997:699–700). For the non-elite (if the model is followed), authority would

come from covenantal faithfulness — authority would be granted from God since there was compliance with the character of God, and the intent of covenant. An evolving schism between the sacerdotal and covenantal in early Roman Palestine is alluded to in the pericope. On the one hand, the elite is represented by the religious elite (chief priests, elders and scribes in Lk 20:1); and on the other hand the popular prophet, John the Baptist, is presented as a narrative foil to the elite. Luke depicts John the Baptist as a champion for the non-elite. And the message of John the Baptist was one of covenantal renewal and repentance (§ 5.3).

Instead of attempting to query specific actions or teachings, the priestly elite simply bunches all Jesus' controversial actions and teachings together (ταῦτα in Lk 20:2 [NA<sup>27</sup>]);<sup>107</sup> and seek to undermine the credibility of Jesus by attacking the source of his authority.<sup>108</sup> It is understandable that the priestly elite would seek to attack the authority of Jesus. By throwing the traders out of the Temple, Jesus “is acting like someone who thinks he is in charge” (Wright 2004:234). Instead of appealing to the existing priestly authorities to correct the behaviour of the vendors — in the very base of their authority — he takes matters into his own hands, and declares that the vendors are an example of the corruption of the whole Temple institution. By extension, this indictment included the custodians of the Temple. Even worse: not only does Jesus challenge the authority of the Judean elite by purifying the Temple in Luke 19:45–48; he circumvents the Temple by announcing the forgiveness of sins

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<sup>107</sup> The meaning of “these things” in the passage of the questioning of authority vary in the Gospels. Fitzmeyer (2008:1273) argues that “these things” includes the cleansing of the Temple in Mark 11:27. The same can be argued for Matthew 21:23. However, in Luke 20:2 the emphasis is all of Jesus' teachings. The background is given in Luke 20:1 as “one day, as he was teaching” (NRSV). It is a more generic background linked to his activities as a teacher. Stein (1992:488) allows for a larger scope to “these things”, and argues that they include other activities such Jesus' authority to forgive sins (Lk 5:24; 7:49), Jesus' ability to heal even on the Sabbath (Lk 6:6–11; 13:10–17), as well as Jesus' demand for personal allegiance to him (Lk 9:23–24, 57–62; 14:26). Stein's argument rests on the basis of the plural form of “these things”. The argument of Stein is followed here, since it is unlikely that teachings in itself would have infuriated the Judean elite alone. Rather the inflammatory nature of “these things” spurred them unto action.

<sup>108</sup> The setting for Luke 20:1–19 is the Temple courts (Lk 20:1). The Temple courts were likely to offer a public setting for teaching (Keener 2009:506). But the location is poignant when it is taken in account that Jesus' antagonised the Judean elite in Luke 20, and proceeds to declare the destruction of the Temple in Luke 21:1–38.

(Lk 5:20; 7:47–48 & 24:47). This was after all the main business of the Temple (Borg & Crossan 2009: Chapter 1 [Kindle edition]). These teachings and actions pre-empt a time when the Temple will no longer be the *locus* for forgiveness (Garland 2012:783).

In the pericope, the discourse starts revolving around the source of authority. This is because Luke portrays authority as being derived, not inherent. In other words, authority is given: “Who is it who gave you this authority?” (Lk 20:2, NRSV). Luke uses the narrative as an opportunity to establish that the authority of Jesus is beyond his mere force of personality, popular appeal or miracles. His authority is given. And if authority is given, then the question is where is it derived from? Who is the source? Here then, the deeper issue surrounding religion and authority is ultimately settled for Luke. The question posed by Jesus (Lk 20:4) foresees two possibilities: that authority is derived from God, “heaven” (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, NA<sup>27</sup>), or that authority is derived from human origin (ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, NA<sup>27</sup>).

By moving the matter of the source of authority to the ministry of John the Baptist, Luke underlines three main points (Green 1997:701): in Luke’s narrative, the way in which a character responds to John the Baptist serves as an early indicator of how that character will respond to God — the response to John becomes a barometer of a response to God in the ministry of Jesus.<sup>109</sup> If they are willing to respond to the message of John, they will be more inclined to respond to the message of Jesus. Furthermore, the nature of the ministry of John was prophetic (Lk 1:76; 7:26). And since the ministry was perceived as a prophetic one, it meant by its very definition that the message of the recipient prophet originated with God. The message was from heaven. Now, the message of John the Baptist had a significant socio-political element, and it questioned the Jewish identity of people on the basis of covenantal ethics. This message had troubling implications for the Judean elite — and was not always received well by them (e.g. Lk 7:33). By referring to John the Baptist, Jesus created problems for the priestly elite, because John simply would not accept the existing symbols and praxis of righteousness and authority. Rather, he warned his

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<sup>109</sup> E.g. “And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John’s baptism” (Lk 7:29, NRSV).

audience that a palpable covenantal ethic needed to be exhibited by all (even the religious elite): “Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Lk 3:8–9, NRSV). Finally, Luke presents the ministry of John the Baptist as a precursor for the ministry of Jesus. John was to prepare the way for Jesus (Lk 1:16–17, 32–35, 68–76; 3:16). And if the ministry of John had a divine origin, then the priestly elite had to concede that the authority of Jesus had a divine origin. Like God sanctioned the ministry of John the Baptist, so God sanctions the ministry of Jesus.

So, if Luke 20:1–19 contains a Lukan critique of elite religious ideology, the concept of authority stands out, and should be understood in the context of early Judaism. According to Beaton (2013:62) “authority is a complex term that can refer to the right to do something or to act in a particular manner, like giving an order, enforcing obedience or influencing another”. Whereas power is centred on the ability, capacity, or means to do something; authority tends to focus on the right to do that something. This gives authority a strong moral undertone, since the right to do something is either permissible or not — irrespective of the agent’s ability to do that something. But despite of the semantic difference between authority and power, the two concepts tend to dwell within the ambit of the other.

Luke repeatedly presents Jesus as unique in his authority and power.<sup>110</sup> There have been two main approaches to studying the concept of the authority and power that Jesus exhibited (Beaton 2013:62). The one approach has been to narrow the approach down to a linguistic one. In this approach, the linguistic occurrences of these words (authority and power) in the Gospels, and other applicable intertextual sources, are examined. This approach tends to exclude the social influence and consequences of authority within early Roman Palestine. It keeps the discussion within the broader concerns of giving an exact linguistic and theological

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<sup>110</sup> Verses in Luke that mentions the authority of Jesus include: Lk 4:32,36; 5:24; 7:8; 9:1; 10:19. Verses that mentions the power of Jesus include: Lk 1:17; 3:16; 4:14,36; 5:17; 6:19; 9:1; 10:19; 19:37; 21:27; 22:69; 24:49.

understanding. The second approach is to apply sociological and political theory to the applicable textual data to better examine the power relationships between groups and individuals of the implied readers and the actual readers — and the consequences thereof. The second approach is closer to the particular aims of this dissertation, and will be explored in the following sections.

It is argued here that the matter of religious authority is important, because Luke 20:1–19 goes beyond a mere challenge-riposte between the Judean elite and Jesus. It goes to the heart of how the Jesus movement saw their right to the proclamation of Jesus, and it goes to the socio-economic consequences of the political leadership of the Judean elite. The Judean priestly elite was not clergymen in an ivory tower, keeping themselves busy with irrelevant minutiae of the sacerdotal system. They were the political, religious and cultural aristocracy — whose ideologies and decisions had vast sway of the ordinary life of the Judean and Galilean peasant. For Luke, authority is predominantly religious. His philosophy on authority is determined by a perspective on the very nature and character of God.<sup>111</sup> It is appropriate that the philosophical basis of authority in early Roman Palestine revolves around religious ideology in Luke 20:1–19. It was, after all, a society shaped and nurtured by covenantal ideals and principles (§ 7.2). To take the theological perspectives of Judaism out of the equation is to render examination of Judean and Galilean society unintelligible.

## 7.5.1 THE INNER TEXTURE OF THE QUESTION ON THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

### 7.5.1.1 The Inner Texture of Luke 20:1–19

The repetitive texture and pattern in Luke 20:1–8 revolves around the word “authority” (ἐξουσία in Lk 20:2,8). Two sources of authority are presented: namely

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<sup>111</sup> Authority based on a religious philosophy may seem counterintuitive to some modern readers. The modern separation of church and state makes the idea seem antiquated. But that does not change the salient issue for modern states either. Authority must be derived from a particular ideology. Which begs the question of what is the philosophical basis of that particular ideology? And that particular philosophical basis will determine the eventual social phenomena of that society, since it is continually shaping and defining a nation through the exercise of power and the use of resources. This is an important matter to any society.

heaven (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, NA<sup>27</sup>), or human agency (ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, NA<sup>27</sup>). The use of the word “heaven” is a circumlocution for “God” (Garland 2012:784). The rhetorical use of contrast points out the tension surrounding the question of authority. And the tension of the question of authority centres on the source of authority.

Opening-middle-closing texture and patterns in the pericope also point out power relationships at play. The “chief priest and the scribes” (Lk 20:1) is applied as an inclusion device. The pericope starts (Lk 20:10) and ends (Lk 20:19) with a reference to the Judean elite. The middle texture refers to non-elite tenants (used five times in Lk 20:9,10,14,16); as well as slaves (twice in Luke 20:10,11). “Tenants” here refer to workers who lost their land to latifundialisation and invoke the peasant resentment of absentee landowners who often lived in urban areas (Malina & Rohrbaugh 2003:308). The contrast could not be greater between the priestly elite and these impoverished tenants. Yet, by means of inversion, the parable makes the tenants a metaphor for the priestly elite (Lk 20:19). This irony is apt because of the notion that the priestly class was never to own land (Dt 18:1–5) — just as tenants never owned land. It also plays on the resentment that the tenants probably had toward the elite. But instead of being the recipients of resentment from actual tenants, the elite now exhibits resentment in the parable towards the actual owner, God.

The next repetitive texture and pattern is the use of “vineyard” (six times in Lk 20:9,10,13,15,16). In Isaiah 5:1–7, the vineyard is a metaphor for Israel.<sup>112</sup> The inversion of the elite and the non-elite is made complete here. The narrative inversion of the chief priests highlights the injustice of their actions towards actual tenants. It is a case of putting the shoe on the other foot. It also settles the question of authority. All authority is from God. Authority is not derived from Roman

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<sup>112</sup> Crossan (1971:452); Keener (2009:509) and Wright (1996:178) also link the parable of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5:1–7 (also cf. Is 3:14; Ezek 17:6; Hos 9:10). For Wright, the parable conveys the urgency of the crisis for the Judean priestly elite. Their dominant ideology, with its praxis and symbols, was at the point of collapse. The owner has sent messengers, now he is sending the heir. A point of no return has been reached. The elite must repent. The irony in the narrative is the ominous nature of the questioning of the religious leaders of Jesus. At first glance, it appears as if the Jesus movement is at a crisis point. The elite is gathering to stamp out their momentum. Yet, it is actually the Jerusalem elite who are at a crisis point. God is about to act.

patronage, traditional sacerdotal offices, or another form of human agency. He is the covenantal owner of the vineyard of Judea. And in keeping with God's character, the fruit that he desires from the vineyard of Israel is covenantal justice. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!" (Is 5:7, NRSV).

By linking the parable to existing social injustice, and using inversion to highlight the plight of the peasants, the moral dimensions of authority come to the fore. Authority is not only about the right to use power, but it is also about the societal impact in using that power. The right to the use of power needs to be balanced with the responsibility in using that power. In the parable of the wicked tenants, this moral dimension is depicted by how the tenants start justifying criminal activities and injustice on the basis of their circumstances.<sup>113</sup> They fear that the owner would evict and punish them (Lk 20:16), and therefore take a strange leap of logic that their tenancy would be safe should they murder the heir. They reason that they may even make a claim to the land. This strange leap of logic does not reflect reasonably what the action of an owner would be in the face of such a huge personal affront. The owner would seek justice or vengeance. Rather it reflects how, when the moral component of authority is removed, the compass in the use of authority is also lost. All kinds of injustices are rationalised. Perhaps it even allows Luke to comment on the injustice of the execution of Jesus before the fact.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Keener (2009:512,514) highlights the moral abhorrence of the tenants in the Matthean version of the parable. They break all social conventions by killing unarmed heralds. There were no laws that would grant the tenants the land if they murdered the heir. Their reasoning, and actions break all social conventions, and are depicted as truly evil. The question is whether the parable echoed actual societal conditions in early Roman Palestine? It reminds of Josephus' statement that "the nation began to grow mad with this distemper" (*Ant.* 18.1).

<sup>114</sup> Fitzmeyer (2008:1281) links the parable closely to the rejection of Jesus by his contemporaries. This Lukan theme is repeated in other pericopes such as Lk 4:16–30; 7:31–35; 11:29–32, 49–54; 13:34–35; Acts 4:1–3; 7:51–58. In this view, the sending of another type emissary (the son) offers an opportunity for the tenants to reconsider their position. However, the thinking of the tenants here may be that the owner is dead, and that the son was the heir. Therefore, by killing the son, the vineyard becomes ownerless, and that their claim to the vineyard as first claimants likely. In the process, they did not realise that the owner, though distant, still lived (Marshall 1978:730).

But it also settles the authority of Jesus for the Jesus movement. He is not a “slave” (Lk 20:10–11); he is a “beloved son” (τὸν υἱὸν μου τὸν ἀγαπητόν, NA<sup>27</sup> in Lk 20:13), and the heir (ὁ κληρονόμος, NA<sup>27</sup> in Lk 20:14), who has the vineyard as an inheritance (Lk 20:14). This is an astonishing development. It begs the question of whether the resultant bewildered response of the audience<sup>115</sup> was on the wickedness of the tenants (Crossan 1971:464–465); or on the unexpected position of Jesus as the beloved son and heir?<sup>116</sup>

Again the use of contrast (between a servant and a son) serves to make an important point in the discourse. Covenantal authority suggests that God would send a servant to conduct his business as the owner of the land. Surprisingly, a son comes to conduct the business. In this sense, Jesus answers where his authority is

<sup>115</sup> “When they heard this, they said, ‘Heaven forbid!’” (Lk 20:16, NRSV).

<sup>116</sup> The interpretation of Luke 20:16 is likely to be linked at the identity of the “they” (ἀκούσαντες, NA<sup>27</sup>) that respond to the parable. Are “they” the Judean elite or the audience? Stein (1992:493) argues that the Judean elite answers in Luke 20:16, with the wish that the resultant judgment may not happen. In other words, the religious leaders understand the content and aim of the parable, and rather than disputing the characterisation and details, are repulsed at the possibility of judgment on themselves and Jerusalem.

Marshall (1978:732) and Nolland (1998: 952) disagree with the interpretation of Stein, and argue that it is the audience that are repulsed at both the actions of the elite, and the resultant judgement. This argument is strengthened when Luke 20:9 is taken in account. There Jesus tells the parable as he addresses the “people” (NRSV). Furthermore, Green argues that Jesus then proceeds to address the people again with the reference to Psalm 118:22 in Luke 20:18. So in this line of thought the “they” refer to the audience.

But, would the audience be sympathetic to the Jerusalem elite? Would they respond with a wish that judgment would not come on the elite? This is unlikely when the socio-political environment of early Roman Palestine is considered. It is argued here that the tenants of the parable refer to the religious elite (as the religious elite themselves understand it in Luke 20:19). The indictment by Jesus with the parable (Lk 20:9–16) and the use of Psalm 188:22 (in Lk 20:17), is aimed at the religious elite, in the public court of the “people” (Lk 20:9). The “people” respond to the parable with an outcry of indignation at the moral injustice depicted in it. Jesus proceeds to pile further indictment on the Judean elite in Luke 20:17. What happened in the past, is sure to happen yet again. As the prophets were killed in the past by the Judean elite, so Jesus is to be killed (Garland 2012:794).

This is important because Luke is not contending that God is judging the people of Judea. Rather God is rejecting the Judean elite and their leadership (cf. Keener 2009:511).

from. His authority is from heaven, but in a surprising way — Jesus is a son and not a mere servant.<sup>117</sup> This means that his authority stems from a deep sense of intimacy with God.<sup>118</sup> At the very least it can be inferred (regardless of later Christological developments) that his authority stems from being a charismatic (§ 7.5.3) and holy man — with a unique personal relationship and revelation of God. He is doing far more than his covenantal duty (which of course the “tenants” ought to be doing as well). He is acting out of a special revelation of God.

Lastly, the inner texture indicates the ideological nature of the conversation: derivatives of the word “say” or “speak” (λέγω) appears twelve times in the pericope. Who is talking, and what they are saying is an important feature in the text (§ 7.5.3).

### 7.5.1.2 Luke’s portrayal of the Religious Elite

There is a larger inner texture in Luke (beyond this pericope) that is applicable to the matter; namely, the literary portrayal of Luke of the religious leaders.<sup>119</sup> Without an

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<sup>117</sup> Kingsbury (1986:654) argues the importance of identity in the parable. Jesus is the son of God. Kingsbury sees parallels with the trial of Jesus in Mt 26:57–68 & Lk 22:66–71 where the identity of Jesus as the son of God is queried. Kingsbury argues that that is the same group of Judean elite at the hearing and the parable, and that they got the accusation (of the identity of Jesus) from the parable itself (in Lk 20:9–18).

<sup>118</sup> Green (1997:707) argues the same point, but from the angle of legal reasons (not relational intimacy). In this argument, a servant is granted a legal right to represent the owner, but a son has even more a legal right to represent the father because of the status of the son as heir. The authority of the son carries more weight than the authority of the servant. Either way, the actual reader understands that at this point of Lukan narrative, the son refers to Jesus (Stein 1992:492). This is a result of the previous references of Luke 3:22; 9:35 to Jesus as a son.

<sup>119</sup> No distinction is made in this section between the various religious leaders. A broad portrait is sketched of how religious leaders are depicted in Luke. These leaders may very well have belonged to various classes and social sects. An argument can be made that the Pharisees and Sadducees did not belong to the same class (Saldarini 1989: 4–5, 35–49, 87–88, 99–106; Sanders 1992:404, 474).

More so, in the Lukan narrative, the chief priest, elders and scribes play a central role in the denouncement and execution of Jesus. Green (1997:371) argues that the chief priests, elders and scribes appear in Lukan narrative (Lk 9:21; 19:47; 20:1) as the leaders that are responsible for his suffering. They are the Jerusalem elite who are closely linked to the Temple: “When appearing as a kind of triumvirate in the Lukan narrative, these groups are invariably joined in their hostility toward Jesus”. Stein (1992:487) classifies this last group

understanding of that, the critique of the elite in Lk 20:1–19 loses important elements.

The central quality of religious leaders in Luke is self-righteousness — and a resultant lack of love towards others (Powell 1990:95; Tannehill 1991:169–189). This is perhaps best described in Luke 18:9, where in the preamble to the parable, Luke notices: “He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt” (Lk 18:9, NRSV). The “some” referred to here can be applied to a diverse range of religious leaders in Luke.

This self-righteousness can be seen in various ways in Luke: in their opinion, they do not need to be forgiven (Lk 7:41); they have no need to repent (Lk 15:7), and they feel assured of their righteousness with their service and obedience to God (Lk 15:29). This is all fair and well still, but the killer blow in Luke comes with the insistence that — despite their claims to righteousness — the religious leaders regularly commit ethical compromises. They are unclean within, commit extortion and are full of wickedness (Lk 11:39). They are corrupted even if they hide it well (Lk 11:44). This dichotomy between a self-perception of righteousness, and the reality of ethical compromises, leads to a constant effort on their part to prove to others that they are indeed righteous (δίκαιος). They are the lawyer who is “wanting to justify himself” (Lk 10:29, NRSV) with the question that leads to the parable of the Good Samaritan. They pretend to be righteous (δικαίους εἶναι, NA<sup>27</sup>, Lk 20:20). They “are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others (ὁμοῖς ἐστε οἱ δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, NA<sup>27</sup>); but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God” (Lk 16:15, NRSV).

This effort to prove themselves to be what they in reality are not, leads to a life of apathy towards others. In Luke 7:47 this is worded as an aphorism: “But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little” (NRSV). Here the sinful woman showers Jesus with extravagant love (since she has been forgiven much), but Simon even neglects

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(the chief priests, elders and scribes) as delegations from the leadership of Judea, e.g. the Sanhedrin.

the basics of hospitality (since he has been forgiven little). The efforts of self-justification, and hardness of heart, lead rather to a love of being honoured by other people. They love to be seated on the best seats and greeted in the marketplace (Lk 11:43; 20:46). They go about in long robes and make needlessly impressive prayers (Lk 20:46–47). They choose the best places at feasts (Lk 20:46).

Ultimately this pride, lack of self-knowledge, and lack of love leads the religious to be at odds with the purposes of God. They reject Jesus and “did not recognize the time of your visitation from God” (Lk 19:44, NRSV). They killed him and did not know “what they are doing” (Lk 23:34, NRSV). This lack of true knowledge of the purposes of God, leads the religious leaders to evaluate things from a human perspective. “Jesus is an enigma to the religious leaders because they evaluate him from a human point of view. They do not perceive the full truth about who Jesus is and even what they do perceive is evaluated falsely” (Powell 1990:99). This is an ironic stance, since by its very definition the religious leaders ought to be the champions for the purposes of God. Hence, the strong indictment against them by the Jesus movement.

During the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (Lk 19–23:49), the religious leaders actively seek to kill Jesus and to question his authority. The enmity between Jesus (and the purposes of God), and the religious leaders (and their perspective from a human point of view), has now escalated to the point of no return. However, the religious leaders fear the people (Lk 19:48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:4). They are caught in their own vice of wanting to appear righteous before people. Therefore, they cannot just have Jesus killed. It has to appear like the right sort of thing to do. It is a challenge to their perceived authority over Jesus. Luke 20 depicts these cycles of the religious leaders trying to entrap Jesus. They are trying to diminish his support among the people (Lk 20:26), and then to hand him over to the authorities (Lk 20:20). These efforts fail, since Jesus manages to shame and silence them (Lk 20:26,40).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>It should be noted as well that the overall picture of the religious leaders is not completely doom and gloom in Luke. Luke gives a positive picture of some religious leaders who are truly righteous, and who respond to the purposes of God. Luke (Lk 1:6) starts with a

These characterisations of the religious leaders are important to Luke 20:1–19. According to Luke, their qualities of self-righteousness and lack of love compound the problem of their static source of authority as chief priests. On the surface, their authority comes from heaven, since they are the custodians of the Temple. But in reality, their authority is from human agency as Roman clients. They are more concerned about what people think (both the Jewish people and their Roman overlords), than being receptive towards heaven. Here is a subtle dig at institutional power and authority in general. Human history is rife with incidents where those who are in office dispense power and resources with little thought to the actual people they ought to be serving.

### **7.5.1.3 Summary of the Inner Texture**

The inner texture of Luke 20:1–19 illustrates the antagonism and schism between the Jesus movement and the Judean priestly elite. There are several layers to this schism. On the deepest level, the Jesus movement is exposing the hypocrisies of the Judean priestly elite. They are caught between their patronage obligations to the Romans, their sacred covenantal obligations as the religious leaders toward the people, and also their inner conflicts (which Luke depicts as greedy, self-righteous, and unloving). In the process they are merely seeking the approval of people, not of God.

When Jesus infuriates them with the cleansing of the Temple, the forgiveness of sins, and other inflammatory teachings and actions, they challenge Jesus to declare his authority in these matters. They rest assured in their authority as the ultimate custodians of the Temple, and their compliance with sacerdotal traditions. Yet Jesus uses the opportunity to set the record straight on the matter of authority. Authority

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righteous religious leader (Zechariah), and ends with Joseph of Arimathea who was righteous (Lk 23:50). Not all leaders are merely painted with the same brush stroke. Perhaps the point is that Luke is not suggesting that all leaders are inherently hypocritical, but that the socio-political climate has moved the religious leaders beyond a place of reason and receptivity. Indeed, it is an indication that in Luke's mind the antagonism of the religious leaders towards Jesus did not need to escalate as it did. Not all leaders were self-righteous or hypocritical (Powell 1990:107).

comes from God. He is the owner of the vineyard. True covenantal authority is not tied to institutional positions. The Judean elite are merely tenants of the vineyard, but Jesus is the son. The nature of confrontation between Jesus and the Judean priestly elite is embodied by the socio-cultural texture of challenge-riposte.

## 7.5.2 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE QUESTION ON THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

### 7.5.2.1 Challenge-Riposte

All three cycles of questioning by the religious elite in Luke 20:1–19; 20–26; 27–44 are prime examples of the social phenomenon of challenge-riposte. With challenge-riposte the public nature of a dispute become evident, since the challenger seeks to diminish public support of the recipient (Robbins 1996a:81).

This ties in well with the Lukan depiction of the religious leaders who thrive on public platforms where they seek to acquire honour for themselves. There are various ironies at play within the narrative. The priestly elite, who seek to justify themselves before people, are trying to expose Jesus as one who has no (divine) authority. The irony is that they prefer the honour of people rather than the honour of God. In the text this irony is exposed by Jesus asking if authority is from God, or human agency. The focal point of the question may be John the Baptist, but it certainly begs the question of where the authority of Jesus is from — and where the authority from the priestly elite is from. It forces the issue. By their actions, the Judean elite give an oblique admission that their authority is from human agency: they fear the people (Lk 19:48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:4) and seek to use the opinion of people to diminish the honour of Jesus.

Of course, there is more at stake than just trying to acquire or diminish prestige: “They want him to claim divine authority publicly so that they can condemn him publicly for blasphemy. If he denies that he acts with divine authority, they can also condemn him for blasphemy for usurping divine authority” (Garland 2012:784). But it does reflect the Lukan theme (§7.3.1.2) that the religious leaders are trying to justify themselves in front of other people. Then Jesus turned the tables on them with the

parable of the Wicked Tenants. Their true position is given and implied in the parable. The priestly elite are mere tenants. Jesus is the beloved son. The inversion could not be more stark. Authority given by human agency matters little. The Judean priestly elite still do not own the vineyard. They have no legal right to it. Only God has the right to bestow authority. This snub on the priestly elite is amplified by the public nature of the discourse. A broader audience is addressed (Garland 2012:785). The priestly elite is side-lined and left as mere spectators to a discourse that attacks their prestige (they are merely tenants) and their integrity (their murderous intentions are exposed).

In all of this, the Lukan portrayal of Jesus is not that of victimhood and passivity. He seems to welcome the challenge: “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me” (Lk 20:3, NRSV). The challenge presents an opportunity to settle the matter of authority. Either way, authority becomes the central matter to all the cycles of challenge-riposte in Luke 20. In the first cycle the source of authority is discussed — and it is left to the audience to decide for themselves who is acting by which authority. In the second cycle the matter of authority is moved to the socio-political arena: Caesar and God are pitted against each other. What belongs to God and what belongs to Caesar? Lastly, the matter of authority of the Scriptures is invoked. Is Jesus truly obedient to the Scriptures, and skilful in its interpretation? In all of this Jesus is not a passive bystander, but engages the challenges with ripostes of his own: in the first cycle he asks if the authority of John the Baptist was from God or human agency; in the second cycle he asks whose image is on a denarius, and in the third cycle he quotes from the Psalms to establish his own authority as a teacher.<sup>121</sup>

### **7.5.2.2 Summary of the Socio-Cultural Texture**

The convention of challenge-riposte indicates the Judean elite trying to seek honour in the eyes of the public. They are seeking to justify themselves in front of others. Yet Jesus uses the opportunity to vindicate his message, and his identity. His authority is

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<sup>121</sup> It is further argued in the dissertation, that after the three cycles of challenge-riposte in Luke 20, the final vindication (the final riposte) of Jesus is the declaration of the destruction of the Temple (§ 5.5.2.1).

from God; their authority is from human agency. His position is one of kinship, they are merely the tenants. The honour of Jesus is elevated, and he poses even more of a danger to the Judean elite.

### 7.5.3 THE IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE OF THE QUESTION ON THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Luke 20:1–19 lends itself to an examination of the ideological texture of the text. A prominent feature of the text is the use of λέγω (which indicates that conversation around ideology is a key feature of the pericope — e.g. “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me” (Lk 20:3, NRSV). The discourse of Luke 20:1–19 revolves around authority, and therefore the right to use power. This falls into the realm of ideology. Robbins (1996a:96) follows closely the definition of Elliot (1990:268) to formulate his approach to the ideological texture: “this integrated system proceeds from the need to understand, to interpret to self and to others, to justify, and to control one’s place in the world. Ideologies are shaped by the specific views of reality shared by groups — specific perspectives on the world, society and man, and on the limitations and potentialities of human existence”.

This definition of ideology links closely with the definition of authority. The right, and the ethical nature of the application of power, is closely scrutinised by the perception of “one’s place in the world” and the “perspectives on the world” that leads to that conclusion. Power is always driven by ideology — and authority is assumed on the basis of that ideology.

#### 7.5.3.1 Ideology of Power in the Discourse of the Text

When approaching the ideological texture of texts, Robbins (1996a:113) recommends the findings of Castelli as a framework for discussion.<sup>122</sup> The following observations can be made on the basis of those principles:

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<sup>122</sup> These principles are as follows:

- A. Define the systems of differentiations that allows dominant people to act upon the actions of people in a subordinate position.

In Luke 20:1–19, the ebb and flow of power is marked. Who really has power and who really has authority in the narrative? On the surface the priestly elite has authority and power over the Jesus movement. Their power and authority is derived from two sources. It has a socio-political base shaped by Herodian and Roman patronage — the hard power behind their social status. But their power and authority also have a religious and institutional base — they are the custodians of the Temple and its sacerdotal system. This is the soft power behind their social status. Their power is of such nature that they can consider how to go about having Jesus executed. This is surely the ultimate expression of power over another human being. This connection between their power, their intent to execute Jesus, and the Temple as a base of power is best described in Luke 19:47: “Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him” (NRSV).

Yet their power and authority is complicated, not all that sure-footed, and certainly not easily dispensed on Jesus. The priestly elite fear the people (Lk 19:48; 20:6, 19, 26; 22:4). This implies that their power is not all that secure as they would like to imagine. Furthermore, they struggle to understand the nature and mission of Jesus. Jesus often leaves them “amazed” and “silent” (Lk 20:26) even though they want to “lay hands on him at that very hour” (Lk 20:18). The power and authority of Jesus is beyond them. They struggle to understand it. After the discourse of Jesus, they “no longer dared to ask a question” (Lk 20:40).

On the other hand, all is not as it seems with Jesus. On the surface he has little socio-political power. He enters Jerusalem as a Galilean peasant. He is not part of the Judean elite. He has no patron-client relations with the Roman or Judean elite. He has no wealth. He has no religious office. He has no army. Yet he turns the tables on the priestly elite with the parable of the wicked tenants. It is the priestly elite who has no power — they are merely tenants. In Lukan thought it is Jesus who

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- B. Articulate the type of objectives held by those who act upon the actions of others.
  - C. Identify the means for bringing these relationships into being.
  - D. Identify the forms of institutionalisation of power.
  - E. Analyse the degree of rationalisation of power relationships.

has true authority — he is the beloved son and heir to the vineyard. “...the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased’” (Lk 3:22, NRSV).

The pure types of religious authority (initially proposed by Max Weber) are of some use here. According to these idealised types, authority may be derived from charismatic authority, traditional authority, or bureaucratic authority (Jeffers 1991:146–147). Charismatic authority is based on the individual’s unique personal qualities. This type of authority exists because a social group believes in the qualities of the individual leader in question, and the force of his or her revelation. Prophets typically exhibit this type of authority. The prophets challenge the existing power dynamics in society in times of upheaval and crisis. Charismatic authority is derived from powerful personal qualities, or a compelling revelation of the divine, or an alternate vision of society. Traditional authority is based on communal respect for the sacred traditions of a particular society. Traditional authority has a cyclical view of history,<sup>123</sup> that leads to the embrace, the keeping of, and support for sacred traditions. Here the role of the elders (or a gerontocracy) is a good example. It is the role of the elders to both follow and impart sacred traditions that prescribe societal function. Traditional authority is derived from adherence to sacred traditions. The last pure type of authority is bureaucratic authority. Bureaucratic authority is derived because impersonal political and social processes are followed. Authority is part of the bureaucratic or elected office. This last category best describes societies in the modern bureaucratic political systems, and therefore tend to be out of touch with the social forces of early Roman Palestine. However, the bureaucratic authority of Weber can be adjusted to describe authority bestowed by patronage in the Roman empire.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>A cyclical view of history implies that nothing is ever new. The past tends to repeat itself. Hence sacred traditions of the past help the community to deal with its challenges now. A good example of a cyclical view in the Bible is the wisdom literature of Ecclesiastes: “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, ‘See, this is new’? It has already been, in the ages before us” (Eccles 1:9–10, NRSV).

<sup>124</sup> Although patronage is per definition very personal, and bureaucratic authority very impersonal; political authority was still invested in a particular office. The difference was in how the person came to that office, and what the underpinning of that office was. In

All three pure types of authority can be found in the content of this chapter (as well as the broader Lukan text). For example: the scribal traditions are an excellent example of traditional authority. The scribes are to be custodians of the sacred traditions of Israel (Horsley 2010a:14). Perhaps the religious ideology of the non-elite, with their focal points on the covenant serves as an example of traditional authority as well. The role of the elders,<sup>125</sup> the centrality of social institutions such as the synagogue, and the emphasis of covenantal traditions seem to point towards this form of authority. A prime example is Luke 4: “When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written” (Lk 4:16–17, NRSV). Not only does the text indicate a presence of sacred traditions (“synagogue”, “sabbath”, “custom”, “scroll”, “Isaiah”, “written”); but it also presents an immediate differentiation between authority of Jesus and the synagogue. Jesus is not depicted here as disparaging sacred traditions (he goes to the synagogue as was “his custom”), but equally the foundation of this authority is presented in the line of charismatic authority:<sup>126</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the

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patronage, the process is a personal relationship with the patron, and the social influence of the patron underpins the authority of the office. In other words, the personal nature of patronage and authority invested in a bureaucratic position became intertwined. The person received the office, and the authority that accompanied it, by the personal process of patronage — but the basics still remained. The aims were just different because they were under personal obligations in that office, not impersonal legal processes. But the main point remains of this pure type — authority was derived because of a person’s political status, not due to charismatic revelation or adherence to sacred traditions.

<sup>125</sup> In the first century CE, elders played a significant community function. Their role seemed more crystallised into a type of bureaucratic system in various communities. There appeared to be a council of seven elders who filled civic functions. And an executive committee, which existed of the head of the synagogue, the minister of the congregation and the collector of alms. The executive committee functioned mainly within the synagogue (Osborne & Brown 2013:227). Still, the argument here is that the authority of the elders is based on sacred traditions, hence it was a form of traditional authority. There was a “tradition of the elders” (Mk 7:5).

<sup>126</sup> Especially Gerd Theissen and Martin Hengel are linked with viewing Jesus through this sociological category of authority (Piovanelli 2005:398). Theissen bestows this category on the post-Easter Jesus movement as well. In his view they are wandering charismatics who subvert communities with their radical ethic in accordance with the synoptic Gospels.

captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,” (Lk 4:18, NRSV) and, “Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing’” (Lk 4:21, NRSV). Here, the power of Spirit is given as the source of authority of Jesus, over and above the authority gained from adherence to sacred traditions. It is not enough to adhere to the sacred traditions, one must adhere to the Spirit as well. And Jesus is a prophet empowered by the Spirit. Should the voice of the prophet not be heard, God would then rather work with those outside the sacred traditions of Israel (Lk 4:24–27). This jarring clash on the various perspectives on authority leads to severe conflict between Jesus and his hometown: “When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff” (Lk 4:28–29, NRSV).

In contrast, the priestly elite in Jerusalem serves as excellent examples of bureaucratic authority. They are looking for ways “to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor” (Lk 20:20, NRSV). This intent is a strong admission of dependence on Roman authority. They are enraged since they realised that Jesus attacked their basis of power as officials of the Temple, and set out on a path silencing Jesus. This bureaucratic authority is primarily then an institutional one, and based on patronage in early Roman Palestine (§ 4.1.3). The Judean priestly elite has authority on the basis of their sacerdotal roles, but also because of Roman patronage. This leads to their final accusation of Jesus “perverting” the nation by defying Roman patronage: “Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king’” (Lk 23:1–2, NRSV).

Here then, the social difference between the Jesus movement and the priestly elite becomes clear. For the Judean priestly elite, power and authority is of an institutional nature. Their authority is tied to the priestly traditions and kinship ties (Garland 2012:786). Their religious power is derived from the Temple. And it is upheld by Roman patronage. However, for the Jesus movement, their religious power is derived from the Spirit. It is based on his prophetic calling from God, and his unique relationship with God. This has far reaching implications. In a highly hierarchical

society like early Roman Palestine (and indeed the whole Roman empire), such a religious ideology is dangerously subversive. The old order of authority — and the usual justifications for the use of power by the elite — is swept aside. A higher authority is claimed that is not linked to an institution, but circumvents it and claims it from God directly.

This, of course, was not a truly novel development. Israelite traditions contain many charismatic figures and prophets who claimed to have directly derived their authority from God. Indeed, in the founding figures of Abraham and Moses, such a theme is richly developed. Neither does this type of charismatic authority die with them. The later ecstatic and literary prophets are often depicted as the thorn in the flesh of the Israelite elite and monarchy: they are neither able to control the prophets, nor are they able to suppress their message. Their message is directly from God. And the prophetic message usually challenged their authority, their use of power, and their privilege. Jesus stands in this long tradition as a popular prophet. And this tradition is built on the religious ideology of covenant. God is the owner of the vineyard. He will direct the matters of the vineyard. The political elite should not forget their place — they are but tenants. The prophets speak on the basis of the covenantal ownership of God of Israel. The covenantal claim of God overrides all other sources of authority.

The religious ideology of the Jesus movement interacts with both the religious ideology of both the elite and non-elite in early Roman Palestine. It rejects the absolute authority of the sacerdotal — not as an important function within itself; but because the Temple has devolved into a den of robbers. A crystallised, static authority based on institution and kinship legacy is not respected as absolute. Rather, the Spirit of God empowers according to the covenantal purposes of God. There is a link between the non-elite ideology of covenant and the ideology of the Jesus movement. However, Luke presents Jesus not as the ordinary servant of the covenant (Lk 20:10–12) but as the son and the heir. The claim of Jesus as a holy and charismatic person comes to its own.

### 7.5.3.2 Summary of the Ideological Texture

The ideological texture (as applied here) examines the different perspectives of power within the text. The distinction between the bases of authority becomes clear. For the Judean elite, authority was based on their institutional position, and for the Jesus movement, authority was based on the Spirit. This provided a definitive answer to the question of the origin of authority. The elite's source of authority was human agency, and the source of authority for the Jesus movement was divine agency.

This answer is not sufficient in itself for the phenomenon of social conflict in early Roman Palestine. Here, the pure types of authority of Weber is of some use. According to Weber's types, the basis of authority was charismatic, traditional, or bureaucratic. It would appear that Luke positions the basis of the authority of the Jesus movement within Weber's type of charismatic authority. Jesus has authority because he has a message from God, and he has a special position as the son of God. His authority is ultimate, since he is the heir of the vineyard.

This distinction between the charismatic authority of Jesus and the traditional and bureaucratic basis of authority among the antagonists of Jesus, may explain their opposition to the Jesus movement. But it also explains their exasperation at the Jesus movement. The charismatic authority of the prophets is one that excels at challenging the societal *status quo*. But it also begs the question of how Luke addresses this inherent instability of charismatic authority.<sup>127</sup> Here, the covenantal line of reasoning of the parable of the Wicked Tenants is important. God is the owner of the vineyard. Israel is his vineyard. Nothing will change this dynamic. True power and authority lie with the owner of the vineyard. There is an absolute of authority on a covenantal basis. True authority is derived from understanding one's true position towards the owner. The tenants cannot usurp authority and become the owners. The

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<sup>127</sup> As Jeffers (1991:146) notes, the problem is how is charismatic authority transferred from the unique individual towards others if that authority is based on a personal revelation? Furthermore, if a revelation is personal subjective — how can it be verified? Hence charismatic revelation runs the risk of being unstable, and may, in part, explain the strong stance of bureaucratic authorities in the Gospels to try and quell the Jesus movement.

slaves cannot become the son. The charismatic authority of Jesus does not challenge or subvert the covenantal authority of God. Rather it embraces, and seeks to deepen it. Other prophets have been faithful servants of the owner. They have given the messages to the vineyard. But at last the son, the true heir, is here.

## 7.6 CONCLUSION

For Luke, religious authority plays a central role in early Roman Palestine. Luke 20:1–19 becomes in many ways the crucible for Luke with the struggle between the Judean elite and the Jesus movement. This struggle does not predominantly lie in the political domain (although it dangerously lurks in the background e.g. Luke 20:20–26); nor is the predominant issue economics (although again it plays a dominant role in Luke as a whole). Rather the struggle boils down to religious authority. This fits well with the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013). The model suggests that religious ideology tops the hierarchy of social domains for the non-elite. Perhaps it should not be surprising when the moral component of authority is taken in account. Luke is not just concerned with power, but also with the right to the use of power — as well as the moral dimensions of power.

The parable of the Wicked Tenants describes Luke's perspective on religious authority. All authority is derived from God. He is the owner. Therefore, all authority has a covenantal basis. God is the owner of the vineyard.<sup>128</sup> Here both traditional and bureaucratic authority must find its true place. The tenants represent the bureaucratic view of authority. The tenants have some right and position on the vineyard. But it never supersedes the right and position of the owner. Roman patronage will not delete God's ownership of Israel and its people. The priestly elite cannot usurp what God wants for his people. Luke 20:1–19 critiques the basis of authority of the priestly elite — they are acting presumptuously even though they are

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<sup>128</sup> A theocratic political position is not implied here. God is the owner of the vineyard, but responsibility (and authority) is still granted to those who farm it. The emphasis is laid on responsible use of authority by leaders, in line with the demands of covenantal justice. How people are treated with mercy, justice and humility is a sacred responsibility for leaders. Rather, the point of the parable is the relative position of the tenants to the owner, God. They still have to give an account to God and be good stewards.

merely tenants. They cannot deliberate on the well-being of the vineyard because they do not have the concerns of the owner (God) at heart. Roman patronage has made them a rogue element — they are neither the servants of the owner, nor do they want to have a landlord. Rather they are reasoning among themselves what is the best course for themselves. The vineyard has become to them a resource to acquire and exploit. In reality, the vineyard is a people (Israel) that they are responsible for. This is a devastating comment on the tendencies of institutional (bureaucratic) authority.

Luke 20:1–19 indicates that the social cohesion under Roman patronage was actually a fragile one. The problem with a hierarchical social order, where extraction of resources moves towards the top of the social order, is that it becomes increasingly hard for people to willingly subscribe to such a social order. Carter (2002:487–488) argues that the appearance of early Christian communities indicates exactly the fragility of Roman power. This is not to say that the vulnerability was situated within their military, political and economic structures; their vulnerability was situated in their social order itself. Early Christian communities subverted the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, by circumventing the existing Roman power and authority structures. They found a more compelling social structure under the covenantal concept of the Jesus movement. Here the concept of the sovereignty of God, through the mediation of Jesus, created a more egalitarian, distributive and alternative type of community. These communities tried to circumvent the social obligations of Roman patronage by appealing to a higher authority. If God owns all things, then all things must be stewarded according to the covenantal justice of God. In light of this, the extraction policies of the Roman elite become far less compelling. Early Christian communities are an example of how the religious ideology of divine authority, as linked to covenantal justice, influences economic and political ideologies.

There is a last matter to this chapter. The concurrent theological streams in early Roman Palestine were examined (§ 7.1) by means of the scribal texts, and archaeological data. The conclusion made was that, broadly speaking, scribal theological concerns reflected a desire for personal piety, and voiced eschatological expectations (§ 7.2). The question is, how does the Lukan view of religious authority

interact with the two scribal tracks of personal piety and eschatological expectations? It is argued here that these theological streams could easily become a source of traditional authority (in the case of personal piety), or charismatic authority (in the case of eschatological perspectives). Personal piety claimed to be a faithful adherent of older sacred traditions (e.g. the choice of names for the pseudepigraphical texts [§ 7.1.2]). Eschatological texts claimed mystical revelations of the divine (§ 7.1.3). It is also argued that both these tracks managed to undercut the public platform of covenantal theology. Personal piety withdrew people into household expressions of piety, and eschatological expectations encouraged an introversionist view of society. The parable of the Wicked Tenants presents a charismatic basis for the authority of Jesus, but keeps it firmly within a communal and covenantal theology. This covenantal theology had a public aspect to it. Jesus “was teaching the people in the temple and telling the good news” (Lk 20:1, NRSV).

## **CHAPTER 8: THE LAST SUPPER AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN LUKE**

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted”. He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous”.

(Lk 14:7–14, NRSV)

### **8.1 LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSE IN JERUSALEM AS CRITIQUE ON SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

In previous chapters, the Lukan account of Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem was examined for Luke’s perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine. This was not done in order to limit the examined pericopes to mere contemporary social issues, but because this dissertation makes the presupposition that Luke contains a critique on the social issues that provided a formative social background to the Jesus movement (§ 1.4.1). Appropriate pericopes were identified and categorised, and the resultant chapters reflect the hierarchy of social priority according to elite social ideology. This hierarchy was formulated according to social domains (and the appropriate ideologies within that particular domain), using the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013).

These pericopes were further exegeted using socio-rhetorical criticism. This was done in an effort to formulate Luke's critique of Judean elite social policies and ideologies.

In the social domain of politics, the issue of Roman patronage was highlighted. Roman patronage enabled the Judean and Herodian elite to consolidate their political power in early Roman Palestine. But there was a cost involved: in the process they became bound to ἀύστηρός rulers who (like the Throne Claimant of Luke 19:11–27) were only interested in personal and financial gain. Roman patrons did not prioritise the social cost of their policies. In the process, the Judean elite became akin to the servants of this parable, obligated to produce results for their Roman overlords, and under the threat of punishment for failure (or reward for loyalty). Common decency, and the interests and values of the Judean and Galilean peasant communities (like the social conventions of limited good), were neglected. This made socio-political change very difficult in early Roman Palestine. The hope people fostered “that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately” (Lk 19:11 NRSV), was obstructed by Roman patronage. Roman patronage became an obstacle to the purposes of God, and to the Jesus movement. The ἀύστηρός Throne Claimant stood in contrast with the humble entry of Jesus into Jerusalem; as well as his show of compassion on her people and their fate (Lk 19:41–44).

In the social domain of culture, Luke condemns what the Temple had been reduced to. The Temple intersected with various social domains. It was a cultural, religious, political and economic symbol. The social power of the Temple was probably co-opted by the Judean elite to legitimise their various political and economic policies (§ 5.2). It provided a soft power to the Judean elite. This was especially grating when the economic extractive policies under their watch is considered — the Temple became a den of robbers (Lk 19:46). This link between the Temple and the Judean political elite was possible because of their position as custodians of the Temple. They were the chief priests, but they were also the Judean political elite under Herodian and Roman patronage. In the process, the Temple was judged by Jesus. Not one stone of the Temple will be left on another (Lk 21:6). Jesus takes up the mantle of Jeremiah. Just as Jeremiah was ultimately vindicated as a prophet when

the First Temple was destroyed, so Jesus was vindicated when the Second Temple was destroyed.

In the social domain of economics, the connection between Roman patronage and extraction of resources is highlighted. After all, economics in early Roman Palestine was now dictated by Roman policy. The Roman taxation and trade facilitated a flow of resources centrally to Rome and the Roman elite (§ 6.2). Likewise, resources flowed centrally to Jerusalem. As Luke points out: the things of Caesar had to be rendered back to Caesar (Lk 20:25). But Jesus would not play along with their “craftiness” (Lk 20:23, NRSV). Rather, what belongs to God ought to be faithfully stewarded for God. People (including the elite and non-elite), were in the image of God — just as the denarius carried the image of Caesar (§ 6.7). People belonged covenantally to God. To render to God true worship is to treat people justly, with mercy, and with humility (Mic 6:8). Here the growing plight of the Jewish peasantry, struck by taxation, tribute, debt and homelessness was brought to the fore. It became a matter of social justice. Where the Judean elite tried to entrap Jesus by what is permissible, Jesus points them to the deeper issues of what God wants — and that they have an obligation as the Judean elite to God. And this religious obligation supersedes their client obligations to Caesar. No excuses and hand-wringing would do. As the political elite, in their role as mediators between the Romans and Judean peasantry, and in their enactment of political and economic policies, they still have to render to God what belongs to God.

In the social domain of religion, the issue of authority became important. Authority can be described as the right to dispense power. In Luke 20:1–18 the source of authority is highlighted. Either authority is from God, or it is from human agency (§ 7.3). Luke challenged the institutional nature of the authority of the Judean elite. It was not enough to be custodians of the Temple, and to have Roman backing. This would only cause a stagnation of authority, as it increasingly depended on a human source of authority. For Luke, the Judean elite eventually just feared the peasantry, as well as their Roman overlords. Rather, a covenantal view of authority is given. God is the owner of the vineyard of Israel. This does not imply a theocratic political position. Rather, it demands responsible use of power in line with covenantal justice. How people are treated with mercy, justice and humility is a sacred responsibility for

leaders. This is because all authority is derived from God. In the process, the Judean elite is depicted as mere tenants in God's vineyard. But Jesus is the beloved son and heir. Jesus is truly authorised by God, and empowered by the Spirit. This startling charismatic view on authority (§ 7.3.3.1) challenged the hierarchical and static view of power and authority in early Roman Palestine (and later on the larger Roman empire). But this point of critique was important because religion provided a basis and foundation of the exercise of power in nations such as Judea and Galilee. And, the institutional nature of the authority of the Judean elite allowed for various mismanagement and the abuse of their status as religious and political leaders.

In short, Luke indicts the Judean leaders<sup>129</sup> as self-righteous (Lk 18:9). Their institutional authority provided a false sense of security. They imagined that they were righteous before God and man (Lk 5:30–32). This does not mean that they did not seriously undertake a life of cultic purity. But in the process they strayed far from the designs of God because they were judging things from a human point of view, and not from God's point of view (Lk 11:42). They did not possess the authority of God any more, although they ironically thought that they do. That made them hypocrites (Lk 13:15). This is because the covenantal basis of society has been usurped by the things of Caesar (Lk 20:25). And, in the process they were continually compromising on the ethical basis of their leadership. They loved wealth but not God (Lk 16:13). They were abusing their position as custodians of the Temple and sacred traditions of the Temple. This led to the suffering of the people, and much more suffering was in store, as their blindness escalated political violence towards a disastrous conflict with the Romans (Lk 19:41–43). They became blind to their own bondage to Roman patronage and power, and their greed led to the suffering of the peasantry. This made them unrighteous in the eyes of God. They were even willing to prey on the most vulnerable in society (Lk 20:47). Luke presents a condemning critique of the Judean elite. It is reminiscent of the conclusion of Goodman (1987:7–25) that the eventual spiral of early Roman Palestine into political violence was predominantly due to weak local elite leadership.

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<sup>129</sup> The Lukan references here include a broader spectrum of Judean leaders, including the political elite (the chief priests), their retainers (the scribes) and other religious leaders (e.g. the Pharisees).

However, a movement cannot just be built on a critique against the current *status quo*. Luke depicts the Jesus movement with a far more diverse range of influence. It is argued here that the protest of the Jesus movement was nuanced and existed of both heteroloquy (in the form of the critique summarised above) and an effort to establish a new ortholoquy (in the form of suggested new social patterns).<sup>130</sup> It is also argued that Luke presents the Jesus movement as seeking social influence to address the various societal problems it faced. It was not an introversionist social sect. Rather, the movement focused on the proclamation of “good news to the poor ... to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Lk 4:18, NRSV). In other words, the Jesus movement critiqued their socio-political environment, but also proposed alternative ideologies and social patterns to alleviate the societal ills in early Roman Palestine.<sup>131</sup> This rhythm of critique and solutions offers a theological case study of the Jesus movement and the early Jerusalem church, that subsequent early Christian communities in the wider Roman empire could build on. The question is what are the positive social patterns forwarded by Luke? Which social patterns embodied how the Jesus movement sought to alleviate social conflict in early Roman Palestine?

Here the Last Supper (Lk 22:7–38) provides powerful symbols and discourses on the alternative social patterns proposed by Luke. It serves not so much as a critique on

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<sup>130</sup> The definition of discourse (as well as the social function of discourse) of Malina is followed in this dissertation (§ 1.4.1.3) Two main functions of discourses can be linked to social conflict. Ortholoquy is the discourse that stems from the dominant ideologies of a society or social group. The purpose of ortholoquy is to re-affirm the prevailing ideology, and encourage social patterns of behaviour that reinforces the dominant ideology (this is called orthopraxis). However, as predicted by the social conflict theory, other ideologies compete for dominance within society or a social group. This alternative ideology leads to a discourse that can be termed “heteroloquy”. Heteroloquy aims to unsettle and disturb the dominant ideology (Malina 2001: Chapter 2 [Kindle edition]).

<sup>131</sup> Refer to § 1.4.1.1. The presupposition here is that Luke presents the Jesus movement in this way, and that, by describing the critique and solutions to social conditions that the Jesus movement faced in early Roman Palestine, the audience of Luke should consider the same ideologies and theology in relation to their respective communities. The dissertation is built on the assumption that Luke has a strong slant towards addressing social conflict, and that there are theological underpinnings concerning social conflict and the Jesus movement to be found in Luke. In other words, the dissertation attempts to study the theological perspective of Luke of the social conditions of early Roman Palestine, not to study the historiographical concerns regarding the narrative of Luke and the historical Jesus.

the Judean elite as it gives positive examples of ideologies and social patterns proposed by Luke. It becomes a template of sorts for the positive patterns advocated by Luke.

## 8.2 THE LAST SUPPER AS A PASSOVER MEAL OR ROMAN BANQUET

### 8.2.1 THE LAST SUPPER AS A PASSOVER MEAL

The Last Supper has been studied in great detail both for its implications for the Gospel narratives, as well as its value as a sacrament in Christian history (Perrin 2013:492). Yet the interpretation of these Gospel passages (Mt 26:26–29; Mk 14:22–26; Lk 22:14–23) remains in dispute. This may be due to the brevity of the passages and their elusive aphorisms. The aim of this chapter is not to examine the passage for its later theological applications in the development of the early church, but to determine how it fitted into Luke’s prophetic perspective of the socio-political environment of early Roman Palestine. In this regard, greater attention has been given recently to the Last Supper for its subversive values. But the argument often revolves around the nature of the meal itself. Was the Last Supper a traditional Passover meal; or was it a form of Roman banquet (in the shape of the *deipnon* and *symposium*)? This question is important because it tends to frame the social patterns that it comments on and encourages.<sup>132</sup>

The inner texture of Luke indicates that the Last Supper had a close connection with Passover: “Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it’” (Lk 22:7–8, NRSV). Luke 22:11–12 repeats this close connection: “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?”’ He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there” (NRSV).

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<sup>132</sup> Due to the scope of the research, only the Lukan version of the Last Supper will be considered (as opposed to an intertextual exegesis of the parallel passages in the synoptic Gospels, as well as the Johannine and Pauline perspective on the Last Supper).

Wright (1996:555–556) depicts the Last Supper as a type of Passover meal:

It seems to me virtually certain that the meal in question was some kind of Passover meal. Several almost incidental details point this way. It was eaten at night, and in Jerusalem; Jesus and his followers normally returned to Bethany for the night, but Passover meals had to be eaten within the city limits, and after dark (days in the Jewish calendar began, of course, at sunset). The meal ended with a hymn, presumably the Hallel psalms sung at the end of the Passover meal. The best explanation for Jesus' crucial words is that the head of the household would normally explain certain parts of the Passover meal in relation to the exodus narrative.

But there are problems with categorising the Last Supper purely as a Passover meal. O'Toole (1992:236) lists the following issues with the accounts in the synoptic Gospels: only the Twelve were present with the meal, not families as per custom. Jesus is not portrayed as the paterfamilias who delegates the responsibility to an honoured guest to bless the cup. Usually ἄζυμα is used to denote the unleavened bread of Passover, not ἄρτος as per the Gospel narration. The paschal lamb or bitter herbs are not mentioned in the accounts. A common cup was used, as opposed to the customary individual cups during a Passover meal. There are differences in chronology between the Gospel accounts themselves in their accounts, which then also possibly differs from the calendar followed when the Passover meal was celebrated. Lastly, the regular celebration of communion in the early church differs from the customary annual celebration of Passover — if the former was derived from the latter, then why was Communion celebrated more regularly?<sup>133</sup>

Clearly, the Last Supper was not simply a customary Passover meal. But Luke still makes an effort to connect it to the Passover (Lk 22:15). Marshall (1980:75)

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<sup>133</sup> This last argument holds no bearing on the first century narrative environment of Luke, but simply points out that later Christian communities did not perceive the Communion to be a mere repetition of the Passover.

concludes that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, but that the Last Supper was held earlier than the time when the Passover was usually celebrated (as indicated by the difference in chronology between the synoptic Gospels and John); and that there were calendar differences in any case between various Jewish thoughts concerning the Passover. Wright concurs with this, but puts more emphasis on the religious and symbolic value of the Passover when considering the Last Supper. He describes the Last Supper as a “kind of” Passover meal. Perhaps the point made in the Gospels, was not the ritual accuracy in observing the Passover *per se*, but to connect the Last Supper to the Passover traditions. This is important because the Last Supper, as a Passover meal, connects the ministry of Jesus to the Exodus narrative. Here the Passover meal is laden with political meaning. It instantly evokes the covenantal actions of God as he delivered Israel from political oppression, and put them on a road towards political liberty and statehood. Israel was to be set free from her imperial overlords, and enjoy liberty from oppression in the Promised Land. For Wright, this is a description of how Jesus connected his message of the Kingdom with the prophetic ideal of the return from exiles: “They would have been understood as reinterpreting the meal in relation to himself, claiming that the kingdom-events about to occur were the climax of the long history which looked back to the exodus from Egypt as its formative moment” (Wright 1996:559).

In a broader sense, by linking the Passover to the Last Supper, the Last Supper is placed within the covenantal ideology of the founding of Israel. The central ideology behind the Exodus narrative — and its application of their deliverance — is covenant (§ 7.2). Israel has been providentially delivered because they were chosen as a nation. They were under the covenant of their patriarch, Abraham. Not only does this special relationship promise divine deliverance, but it also defines their identity as an ideal nation of priests of God, and formulates their ideal political climate under the banner of covenantal justice. As Neyrey (1991:363) describes it: “A Passover meal confirms membership in the covenant people of Israel”. But according to Lukan understanding this covenantal link is reconfigured into the person and message of Jesus: “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.’ 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” (Lk 22:19–20, NRSV).

## 8.2.2 THE LAST SUPPER AS A SYMPOSIUM

More recently, the Last Supper has been considered as a Roman banquet, with the discourse in Luke 22:14–38 part of the *symposium*, not as a Passover meal. A *symposium* is the second course of a traditional banquet (Smith 1987:614). During this period the entertainment of the evening was presented. In philosophical traditions, this was the time for conversation about topics of interest to the guests. There are elements to the narrative that are consistent with a *symposium*. The textual evidence for the Last Supper as a *symposium* is the seating position of “reclining” (ἀνέπεσεν, Lk 22:14, NA<sup>27</sup>).<sup>134</sup> This reclined position is a very typical depiction of the position of leisure during Roman banquets. But reclining does not connect well with the traditional Passover symbols of haste (the symbols implied that Israel should be ready to leave Egypt).<sup>135</sup> But most of the textual support does not come from an exegesis of Luke 22:14–38, but rather the argument is formulated on an overall study of the meal motif in Luke. In general, the meal motif follows the social conventions of a Roman banquet. For Smith (2003:222–223) the textual evidence in the Lukan narrative for this — other than the importance of reclining — include: the washing of feet before the meal (Lk 7:44); a ranking of seating at a table (Lk 14:7); and discourses on appropriate themes (Lk 14:7–24).

The appeal of approaching the Last Supper as a *symposium* is that it offers contemporary relevance to the social institutions of the day. Roman banquets depicted and reinforced the ideologies of the Roman empire. Streett (2013:9–18) identifies the Roman banquet as a means for social formation, and setting boundary

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<sup>134</sup> Marshall (1980:59) comments that reclining could also be taken as a “mark of freedom” and therefore became customary at the Passover and other feasts.

<sup>135</sup> Green (1997:755) disagrees with the perception that the Passover had to include symbols of haste. He notes that during Hellenistic times, the Passover also adopted the format of a banquet with reclining, wine to drink, and so forth. It is argued here that Luke’s depiction of the Last Supper does not fit neatly into either a *symposium* or a Passover. Rather it contains elements of both.

markers in Roman society. This was because one's dining partners determined your social standing. Peasants ate with peasants, and the elite ate with the elite. Interest groups, as well as other social groups ate together. Beyond that, the seating arrangements established a kind of pecking order that determined social rank. The most important person was seated at the head of the *triclinium* (Smith 1987:617), and those who were of higher social order were placed closer to the head. Apparently, those of higher social ranking were given larger portions and better quality food (Streett 2013:18–19). The highlight of the evening was the libation offered either to a patron, or a deity. The libation served as both the centre of the banquet, and hinged the main meal (*deipnon*) towards the *symposium*. In all of this then, there was a strong sense of social hierarchy, and maintaining that social hierarchy. But more so, it emphasised the social value of Roman patronage through the host and honoured guests.

Beyond that, the ideology of Roman power was reinforced with banquets. Dining rooms often had frescoes that depicted Roman power, mythologies and heroes. These frescoes honoured Caesar and supported the Roman empire. It reminded guests that Romans were favoured by the gods — they had political power because they were favoured, and were therefore just and right in using that power. As a Roman banquet, the Last Supper offers a relevant social commentary, and alternative to the social hierarchy of the Roman empire. Streett (2013:1) goes as far as describing the Lord's Supper (which is based on the Last Supper) as practised by the early church an anti-imperial praxis. It was a “subversive non-violent act against the Roman Empire”. Streett (2013:3) attempts to categorise the Lord's Supper as a hidden transcript. That is to say, that as early Christian communities celebrated the Lord's Supper, it became an act of social and political deviance — and included an alternative discourse of society under the proclamation of Jesus. And the formative roots of this hidden transcript are found in the Last Supper.

Another appealing factor in seeing the Last Supper as a *symposium*, is that it offers a closer link to the other meal narratives in Luke. This is not really possible when the Last Supper is taken as purely a Passover meal (since by definition the Passover meal is a special and unique occasion). However, Luke uses meals as a literary motif to reinforce many of the teachings of Jesus. If those meals are linked to Roman

banquets, they offer a greater range of commentary on early Roman Palestine. For Smith (1987:617), these meal motifs in Luke carry the following themes: ranking at tables as a form of social status, table talk as a way of teaching, eating and drinking as positive and negative symbols of luxury, table service as a metaphor for community service, and table fellowship as a metaphor for community fellowship. All these elements serve as commentary on the type of societal problems the Jesus movement faced.

So, as a *symposium*, the Last Supper offers a window onto the concurrent political and cultural practices of the day, and proposes a subversive alternative. Here especially the practice of patronage comes to mind, and the huge role it played in politics in early Roman Palestine. The Roman banquet symbolised the exclusive, elitist and competitive nature of Roman patronage. But the Last Supper symbolised a self-sacrificial ethic, and therefore it offered a different social pattern, albeit very close in format to the Roman banquet. The Last Supper as *symposium* would make the ritual symbolism of the Jesus movement far more intelligible in the wider Roman empire (than, say the Passover) since it was both relevant and subversive to existing Roman social practises.

Perhaps too much is made of trying to categorise the Last Supper as purely a Passover meal or purely a Roman banquet.<sup>136</sup> When considered in isolation, both these options create textual problems. Clearly Luke does not intend with the Last Supper narrative to follow a detailed template of what was considered a ritual Passover meal. But that does not mean that Luke does not link the Last Supper to the Passover. Equally, it is highly unlikely that Jesus and the disciples turned into Roman citizens for one evening, and spent their time with elevated conversation around gossip and philosophy. The Jesus movement were far too Jewish for that. However, the Jesus movement was forged in the Roman empire — and spread through the Roman empire. It was relevant to the Roman social milieu. Luke shows

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<sup>136</sup> Blomberg (2009:61–61) concludes that textual evidence favours an interpretation of the Last Supper as a Passover meal. However, the picture changes once the larger motif of table fellowship is taken in account in Luke. In that case some elements of a Roman banquet become evident. However, the problem for the view of Blomberg, is that the Last Supper should not be separated from the larger meal motif in Luke.

great care in his writings to connect the past of Israel with the future of the expansion of the Jesus movement into the Roman empire. From the Gospel to Acts, Luke tries to link the covenantal promises of the past to the future of the proclamation of Jesus in the Roman empire. It is not for nothing that Luke 1 starts with a poetic and narrative account of the covenantal promises to Israel; and Acts ends with Paul in Rome (Acts 28:11–31). Rather, it is prudent to consider how the Last Supper links the current proclamation of the Kingdom with the covenantal past (the Passover) and its social-political environment (the Roman banquet). It is argued here that the covenantal connections between the Last Supper and the Passover should be considered; as well as the social implications of the Roman banquet. This approach fits well into the aims of Luke to fit the covenantal past into the social milieu and challenges of the budding Jesus movement.

In the following sections, the social domains, and their respective ideologies, according to the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013), will be applied to Luke 22:7–38. But this time (in contrast to the preceding chapters)<sup>137</sup> the hierarchy of importance according to the non-elite interests will be followed. The aim in applying the model to the pericope is to identify and categorise sections in the pericope that speaks to a particular social domain. The reason for following the hierarchy of the non-elite is that the Jesus movement was a non-elite, popular movement in early Roman Palestine. Furthermore, Luke 22:7–38 is examined for positive social patterns and solutions, rather than critique on the Judean elite.

### **8.3 RELIGION AND THE LAST SUPPER IN LUKE: COVENANTAL KINSHIP**

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes”. Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them,

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<sup>137</sup> As set out in § 3.1, Chapter 4–7 examines Luke’s critique of the Judean elite. Since elite ideologies are critiqued, the order of the pericopes examined reflect the hierarchy of elite social domains according to the model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013).

saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me”. 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”.

(Lk 22:17–20, NRSV)

### 8.3.1 THE INTER TEXTURE OF THE LAST SUPPER

Covenant is a central theme in the Last Supper. In Luke 22:17–20, three intertextual connections stand out that links the passage with older Torah and prophetic covenantal traditions. The bread and the wine is a reconfiguration of the covenant between Melchizedek and Abraham in Genesis 14:18–23. The Passover itself links to the Mosaic covenant. And the “new covenant” is a recontextualisation of the prophetic ideal of Jeremiah 31:31.

#### 8.3.1.1 The Oral-Scribal Traditions of Abraham

Luke contains numerous references and allusions to Abraham. Luke 1:55 & 73 hold the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist as a fulfilment of the oaths and promises made to “our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever” (Lk 1:55, NRSV). These are promises of “being rescued”, and that Israel “might serve him without fear” (Lk 1:74 NRSV). The birth of John the Baptist and Jesus fulfils the arch-covenant of Abraham, and it points to the very intention of the Abrahamic covenant that God will protect and provide for Israel in the promised land: “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great” (Gen 15:1, NRSV). Another feature of Luke is the emphasis on being sons of Abraham (Lk 3:8; 16:24–25,30; 19:9) and daughters of Abraham (Lk 13:16). Sons and daughters of Abraham were included in the promises given to the patriarch Abraham. It meant that God will be their God (Lk 1:55; Fitzmeyer 2008:1226). However, Luke makes it clear that being a descendant of Abraham has high ethical dimensions — it is not a case of mere ethnicity and ancestral lines. John the Baptist gives the dire warning, “Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Lk 3:8, NRSV).

A seminal Lukan pericope in this regard, is the story of Lazarus and the rich man. The story depicts the vast financial discrepancy between the two men. Lazarus is so poor that he laid at the gate, he is covered in sores, and desires to receive even scraps from the table of the rich man. He loses his dignity and allows dogs to lick his sores (Lk 16:20–21). His position is one of severe destitution and deprivation. He is homeless and without food. In contrast, the rich man lives like royalty. He is dressed in purple and fine linen.<sup>138</sup> He shows no restraint or modesty in his wealth, but rather feasts sumptuously every day (Lk 16:19). His lifestyle is beyond the imagination of the vast majority of early Roman Palestine. Ironically, the rich man is cast into Hades after death, but homeless Lazarus is with Abraham (Lk 16:22–23). This is ironic because one's wealth seems to be no indication of one's standing with God. Abraham is depicted as a father figure (Garland 2012:669). Lazarus is “by his side” (Lk 16:23, NRSV), and the rich man even refers to Abraham as father (Lk 16:24). Even though Abraham calls the rich man “child” (τέκνον, NA<sup>27</sup>, Lk 16:25), the implication is clear that being an ethnic descendant of Abraham is not enough to be accepted into heaven. Rather the ethical use of resources indicates those who are truly the children of Abraham (Garland 2012:667). The rich man pleads that his brothers be warned in “my father's house” (Lk 16:27, NRSV) about this shocking truth. Luke raises the issue of ethics and the use of resources again when Jesus calls Zacchaeus a “son of Abraham” (Lk 19:9, NRSV). Zacchaeus changed status is due to his conversion experience, but also because of his promises to use his resources in an ethical manner (Lk 19:9).

Green (1994:68) points out that the allusions to Abraham goes beyond the mere mentioning of Abraham in the Gospel of Luke. The opening passages of Luke 1:5–2:52 actively seek connection points with the Genesis narration of the story of Abraham. Here the birth narratives of Sarah, Mary and Elizabeth bear remarkable similarities (see Addendum C for comparative chart between the two narratives). For Green, these parallel features indicate that the opening chapters of Luke serve as “the continuation of the story rooted in the Abrahamic tradition” (Green 1994:83).

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<sup>138</sup> As example of the wealth of the rich man, Garland (2012:669) notes that “finest linen” (βύσσος) refers to the most delicate and expensive fabric in the ancient world.

This continuation fits into the grander theme of Luke, namely that God's purpose has a universal scope to it: "... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3, NRSV). Luke is setting the tone in these opening chapters that Jesus is bringing salvation to all the peoples of the earth. Luke depicts Abraham as the prototype of humanity under God (§ 7.2). God desires a true covenantal relationship, and gives promises and oaths to Abraham and his descendants. He is "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Lk 20:37, NRSV). To be a son and daughter of Abraham is to be included in the promises of God. To have Abraham as a father, is to have God as a father. In Luke, this universal ideal is prefigured by how the Jesus movement removed the various barriers that separate people. These barriers include social classes, such as the sinner and the outcast, socio-economic classes, gender divides, generational divides, and ethnic divisions. The Abrahamic promise of blessing the world is being fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus.

So already the Abrahamic theme is set when the narration of Luke 22:7–38 starts. The connection between Luke's Gospel and the story of Abraham indicates that covenant indeed plays a foundational role to the understanding of the Luke. Furthermore, as argued here, this covenantal basis of the Jesus movement ought to be traced as far back as the Abrahamic covenant. Where the covenant may be viewed on an ethnic basis (sons and daughters of Abraham), Luke offers a radical reinterpretation of inclusion in the Abrahamic covenant on the basis of ethical behaviour. This ethical behaviour deals with covenantal justice — which also refers back to the covenantal concept that God gave the land to Abraham and his descendants, but that the land belongs to God and has to be stewarded prudently and justly. Nevertheless, the religious divide between Israel and the world, based on ritual purity in terms of ethnicity, is shattered by this radical interpretation. In the process the Jesus movement becomes the true bearers of the Abrahamic promise, with Jesus as the Isaac of the narrative.

This allusion to Abraham is continued in the account of the Last Supper. Just as God broke bread with Abraham in Genesis 18:1–15, so now the little group of apostles (Lk 22:14) breaks bread with the messianic Jesus. He is the "Son of Man" (Lk 22:22, NRSV), to whom the Father has conferred a kingdom (Lk 22:29); and he now

confers this kingdom to the reconstituted Israel (in the form of the twelve apostles). A transfer of authority happens under the brokerage of Jesus (Moxnes 1991:257). Furthermore, the bread and the wine links to the mysterious narrative of Melchizedek (Gen 14:17–24). Melchizedek brings the bread and the wine because he was a “priest of God Most High” (Gen 14:18, NRSV). He blesses Abraham. Likewise, Jesus refers to the bread and wine, but reconfigures these elements to himself. The bread and the wine is now his body and his blood, by which the true descendants of Abraham are blessed.

Here is the key point: within the covenant of Abraham, Israel is socially bound together as kin. Israel is kin because they have a common ancestor (Abraham), and they are in covenant with God, since their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were in covenant with God. What provided social cohesion (among other things) was this sense of covenantal kinship. They were a nation and they had social cohesion because they were an extended family. This was probably a form of fictive kinship, although the ideal was still to attempt tracing one’s lineage back to Abraham (cf. Lk 3:23–38). But in reality that would have proved difficult to achieve — which rather made it a form of fictive kinship. This fictive kinship links with the Passover, where the meal was a family affair. The Passover indicated that God was concerned with “the creation of a people composed of families who will love and serve him” (Marshall 1980:77). This sense of fictive and covenantal kinship is reinforced, and renewed, with the Last Supper. During the meal no actual kin was present. Only the apostles are mentioned. Just as Abraham received the bread and wine from Melchizedek, they are now receiving the body and blood of Jesus. Just as Abraham became the father of many nations, so they will be a blessing to “all the families of the earth” (Gen 12:3, NRSV). Just as the covenant of Abraham is presented as the founding of Israel, so the Last Supper is presented as the founding of the reconstituted Israel in the form of the twelve apostles.

Now this emphasis on fictive and covenantal kinship is repeated elsewhere in Luke. Luke 8:19 notes that Jesus’ actual kin came to him but could not reach him due to the crowds. “Then Jesus said: ‘My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it’” (Lk 8:21, NRSV). This startling elevation of fictive kin might have been hard to accept by an audience steeped in the importance of actual

kinship. Kinship with Jesus is not ethnic, but based on obedience and faithfulness to the “word of God” (Green 1997:330). Furthermore, the statement re-affirms the ethical, not ethnic aspect of being descendants of Abraham. After all, “God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Lk 3:8, NRSV). Rather the “mother and brothers” are those “who hear the word of God and do it” — which is the very ethical praxis of being covenantally faithful to God.

Probably the most severe aphorism in regard to kinship is Luke 14:26 (NRSV): “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple”. Jesus did not disown his “mother and my brothers” in Luke 8:21; rather he elevated the importance of fictive covenantal kinship. But in Luke 14:26, he seems to leave potential members of the Jesus movement with exactly this stark choice — they should choose between their actual and fictive kinship.<sup>139</sup> It seems this choice relates to the radical consequences of being part of the Jesus movement. It has the potential to sever actual kinship relationships. In Luke 21:16, Jesus gives the warning: “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death” (Lk 21:16, NRSV). When it comes to the purpose of God, not even actual kinship should serve as a hindrance. Rather the Abrahamic covenant is reinforced and restated in radical terms in Luke. God is seeking a covenantal relationship through the sacrifice of Jesus: “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’” (Lk 22:20, NRSV). This covenantal act reconstitutes the renewed Israel (in the form of the twelve apostles), but instead of running on actual kinship lines (the twelve patriarchs of the twelve tribes were presented as brothers, and the sons of Jacob), the twelve apostles become Abrahamic kin through the new covenant. They are fictive kin, but under the new covenant fictive kin was idealised as being potentially stronger than the actual kinship of the sons of Jacob.

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<sup>139</sup> Malina & Rohrbaugh (2003:287) notes that this passage calls for a break with biological families, as well as social networks as a precursor for “inclusive table fellowship”.

This redefinition and affirmation of Abrahamic kinship has a surprising consequence. If kinship is determined by the “new covenant”, then entrance into this kinship become radically inclusive. “In it we see the working out of God's purpose to bring salvation to all people” (Green 1994:62). Whereas ethnicity was an implied (but surely not an absolute) barrier to inclusion into the Abrahamic covenant, now ethical considerations become a criterion for inclusion. Also, the precedence of fictive covenantal kinship allows a renewed universal scope in the purposes of God. Here Luke allows for the fulfilment of the Abrahamic ideal that all the families of the earth will be blessed through him, because all peoples may be included into the covenantal kinship regardless of their ethnicity. This radical inclusivity is a feature of Luke. The passage that perhaps best encapsulates this is Luke 14:15–24 (NRSV):

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

This story and moral injunction links well with the meal theme of the Last Supper. The moral of the story is that in the social norm of balanced reciprocity, the ones who are expected to be invited, are indifferent to the honour the invite bestowed upon them. In a sense, they are the ones who deserve to be invited since they ostensibly belong to the same social class as the host. Instead the host now moves towards

those who can in no way reciprocate the honour — the poor, crippled, the blind, and the lame (cf. Lk 7:14). And wherever space is left, anyone who can be reached is compelled (Lk 14:23) to attend. Here, the radical inclusivity is illustrated on social and economic terms, but may very well be applied in a broader sense of radical inclusivity.<sup>140</sup>

This radical inclusivity with the renewed Abrahamic kinship is important to the topic of social conflict, because it is argued here that Luke is providing a basis for social cohesion. In early Roman Palestine, there were many categories and degrees of division. The elite and non-elite were divided in every social domain, and the traditional symbols of social cohesion — Jerusalem, the Temple and the Torah — simply could not provide enough of a mutual basis to resolve points of conflict. Rather the renewed Abrahamic kinship of the Last Supper advocated for a more inclusive, and a stronger sense of covenantal fictive kinship. All points of conflict had to be resolved because they were now brothers and sisters in the faith. Furthermore, the traditional points of division such as gender, class and ethnicity no longer count as valid issues — since the radical inclusivity of the new covenant potentially makes those on the outside part of the fictive covenantal kin. All obstacles to inclusion have been removed.

### **8.3.1.2 The Oral-Scribal Traditions of Moses**

The Last Supper is an obvious fit with the covenantal ideals of Moses. The Last Supper is placed within the framework of the Passover, which was the quintessential covenantal reminder of the Exodus narrative and the covenantal actions of Moses (Borg 2006:97). The “blood of the covenant” in Luke 22:20 is a reconfiguration of Exodus 24:8. Whereas the Abrahamic ideal defines the social ideal of Israel as one of kinship, the covenantal ideal of Moses combines political freedom with religious

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<sup>140</sup> Compare with the comment of Stein (1992:392): “The picture (and reality) parts of the parable flow as follows: a great banquet was given (the messianic banquet/God’s kingdom had now come); the invited guests refused to come (the Pharisees and religious elite of Israel rejected the Messiah and his teachings); the outcasts of society were brought in as guests to the banquet (the least in Israel entered God’s kingdom instead of the religious elite); and even more distant outcasts were brought in as guests (the Gentiles entered God’s kingdom instead of Israel)”.

obeisance. “The story of Passover understood as a liberation story” (Oakman 2012:95). Passover had a redemptive and personal connection with the Jewish people. It reminded them of their covenant with God and that he redeemed them from Egypt; and that a present and future divine deliverance from oppression is a possibility (Marshall 1980:77). Israel might be small in geopolitical terms, but is to be politically free from imperial oppression — due to the covenantal patronage of God. This gift of political freedom is then reciprocated in the form of covenantal loyalty. Politics and religion became perfectly intertwined in covenantal ideology.

The political implications of the Passover still had an impact on early Roman Palestine. Crowds would pilgrimage to the Temple to celebrate the political emancipation of Israel from Egypt, and the covenantal actions of God that led to that freedom. The political symbolism of the Passover proved to be uncomfortable to the Romans. The Antonia fortress on the northwest corner of the Temple was built to house a garrison for such occasions, and to monitor other security threats in Jerusalem (Chancey & Porter 2001:162–203). This increased presence of the Roman military, duly escalated political tension and violence during Passover celebrations. During the reign of Archelaus, people threw stones at soldiers. According to Josephus, 3 000 people were then killed by the troops (*J.W.* 2.1). Cumanus (48–52 CE) ordered soldiers to attack a crowd were was protesting the rude gesture of a soldier during Passover (*J.W.* 2.12). The political crucible of Passover moved the Romans to the extraordinary step of keeping the garments of the high priest in the Antonia Fortress, only to be handed over for sacerdotal use on Passover once the crowds were deemed to be docile enough (Crossan & Reed 2001:241).

This connection between the covenantal traditions of Moses and the Last Supper implies that the Last Supper had socio-political implications. It was not merely a sectarian and religious tradition of the Jesus movement. After all, one of the key words used in Luke 22 is kingdom (Lk 22:16,18,29,30). Not only that, but the discourse clearly veers towards a reconstituted Israel (in the form of the twelve apostles at the Last Supper) that would now enter the Promised Land from exile: “and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, 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” (Lk 22:29–30, NRSV). This made the Last Supper dangerously subversive for the Roman and Judean elite.

### 8.3.1.3 The Oral-Scribal Traditions of Jeremiah

The Last Supper also points to the covenantal ideals of Jeremiah. As Perrin (2013:497) notes: “Arguably, there is no evangelist more conscious of Jesus’ inaugurating the Jeremiaic new covenant than Luke, and the words of institution confirm this”. The use of the term new covenant (Lk 22:20) is a recontextualisation of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31–34 (NRSV). For Luke, as well as Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25, this is an important and unique detail<sup>141</sup>: for example the other Synoptic accounts avoid the descriptive term *καίνος*.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

(Jer 31:31–34, NRSV).

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<sup>141</sup> Other textual sources for Luke lack, in whole or in part, verses 19b–20; which include the statement of the new covenant. Metzger (1994:148–150) argues that the majority of translators accept the longer version (including v19b–20). This is argued on the basis that external evidence for the shorter reading is only partly represented by the Western type of text. In the second place the Bezan editor, (which represents the shorter version) may have been “puzzled by the sequence of cup-bread-cup, eliminated the second mention of the cup without being concerned about the inverted order of institution thus produced, than that the editor of the longer version, to rectify the inverted order, brought in from Paul the second mention of the cup, while letting the first mention stand”. Lastly, the shorter version may have arisen as an effort to protect the sacramental formula from being profaned, as it was circulated among non-Christian readers.

This intertextual connection with Jeremiah points to the ideal of a renewed covenantal humanity. No longer will mere external boundary markers indicate who is included in the new covenant. Rather the new covenant will be espoused in the inner dimensions of a person — God will put the Law within people and write it on their hearts. In Luke, this is a function of the Spirit, and links with the charismatic nature of Jesus' authority. Just as Jesus has authority because of his revelation of the Father, so his disciples will experience the prophetic ideal of Jeremiah of the new covenant. They will have an internal and universal revelation of God due to the self-sacrifice of Jesus.

As discussed in Chapter 7 (§7.3), the discourse on religion with the Jerusalem priestly elite (Lk 20:1–18) revolves around the question of religious authority, and where authority is derived from. This question is important since the basis of authority determines how power is used, and how resources are distributed. This is an important aspect of social conflict. This definition of authority among the Jesus movement must have been disconcerting for the Judean elite (and later Roman authorities in Acts). The traditional gatekeepers of the authorities (the political and priestly elite) are circumvented because a revelation of God is received by the power of the Spirit in the body and blood of Jesus (§ 7.3.3.1). This claim to charismatic authority surely made the itinerant apostles highly suspicious to the stratified Judean and Roman societies. However, the point of the new covenant of Jeremiah is not that the covenantal ideals of Abraham have changed; but rather that it has now been renewed (it is now “written on their hearts”), and aims at individual impact (God will “put the Law within them”) with a universal scope (“they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest”). This makes for a strong egalitarian and inclusive vision of society, where individual ethics (the law written on the heart) joins a societal embrace of God (they will not need to teach one another). This is then appropriate to the intimate setting to the Last Supper, but also lends a universal scope to the meal.

The new covenant of Jeremiah is also focused on the matter of forgiveness. As Luke 22:20 states: “...for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more” (NRSV). This forgiveness is linked to the self-sacrificial ethic of Jesus: “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.’ 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” (Lk 22:19–20, NRSV). This self-sacrificial ethic is necessary to achieve the forgiveness promised in the new covenant:

More significant is Luke’s attribution of the timing of sacrifice to divine necessity—a necessity rooted in Scripture (cf. Exod 12:6, 21; Deut 16:1–7), but portrayed by Luke in such a way that one may be reminded of the progression of events related to Jesus’ death according to divine necessity. The requirements of Torah and the divine purpose concerning Jesus coalesce, so that the necessity of the Passover sacrifice parallels and anticipates the necessity of Jesus’ suffering.

Green (1997:755)

Luke deals with the necessity of forgiveness elsewhere as well (Lk 1:77; 4:18; 6:37). In Luke 1:77, the purposes of God in that time is “to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins” (NRSV). The words of Luke 1:77 echo the internal knowledge and forgiveness of Jeremiah 31. This importance of forgiveness within the new covenant connects with the inclusive and universal scope of the Abrahamic kinship. Forgiveness very much deals with the divisive barriers that separate people along ethnic, class and gender lines, as well as personal and societal affronts and sins. It provides both a mechanism and a model for social cohesion. If Jesus gave his blood and body to ensure the universal and inclusive nature of Abrahamic kinship, then so too should his followers be prepared to forgive.

### 8.3.2 SUMMARY OF THE DOMAIN OF RELIGION AND THE LAST SUPPER

Luke’s critique on the social domain of elite religion (Lk 20:1–18) focuses on the matter of authority, and how authority based on the institution of Temple and Roman patronage inhibited the Jerusalem priestly elite to act justly. Among the elite, the role of religious authority was overshadowed by political patronage. In contrast, the Last Supper hinges primarily on covenantal ideals. A renewal of the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Jeremiaic covenants is envisaged. In Luke 20:1–18, this covenantal renewal rests on the charismatic authority of Jesus. His self-sacrificial ethic ratifies the

renewal of these covenantal ideals. The outcome of this renewal is that the basis of religious authority has now changed. It is no longer stratified, and in the hands of the few; but rather it is inclusive and universal. It is based on forgiveness and attempts to remove the typical barriers between God and humanity — and between social groups themselves. This leads to covenantal kinship, which in the view of Luke, is stronger and more important than actual kinship. The sacrificial ethic of Jesus enables his followers to have a similar experience of knowing God as a Father. This experience results in the same followers becoming descendants of Abraham. And if a renewed humanity is based on covenantal kinship, it changes the dynamic of social conflict. Social cohesion is based on covenantal kinship, rather than the centrality of the sacerdotal system (Jerusalem and Temple).

This view may be somewhat utopian and idealistic, but Luke provides two warnings in this regard. Abrahamic kinship is not possible without a sacrificial ethic (hence the stark choice between actual and fictive kinship in Lk 14:26). Neither is it possible without a covenantal ethic of justice (as per the warning of John the Baptist): if being actual descendants of Abraham is not enough to avoid the moral ethics of covenantal justice; and if God is able to raise sons and daughters of Abraham from rocks (Lk 3:8); then neither are the followers of Jesus absolved from such warnings. The emphasis is after all more on covenant obedience, than kinship in these passages. Nevertheless, covenantal kinship provides a theological basis for addressing social conflict, because it forces each party to consider the outsider in new light. If the reach of covenantal kinship goes to even the outcast and the rejected, then the outsider cannot merely remain static as enemies. Rather radical forgiveness and inclusivity must be pursued in the light of the self-sacrificial ethic of Jesus.

This leads to a new social pattern as embodied by the Last Supper. Abrahamic kinship and its core practice of positive reciprocity was seen to have political and social influence. Just as the Israelites were led out of the oppression in Egypt, so freedom from political and social oppression is foreseen here. This is not to be interpreted as an encouragement for revolution and political violence — but then neither was that the case in the traditions of the Exodus. Just as divine intervention

was necessary to procure the freedom of Israel, so Luke proclaims divine redemption in early Roman Palestine.

#### **8.4 ECONOMICS AND THE LAST SUPPER IN LUKE: POSITIVE RECIPROCITY**

Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money.

(Lk 22:3–5, NRSV)

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”.

(Lk 22:19, NRSV)

##### **8.4.1 THE INNER TEXTURE OF MEALS IN LUKE**

###### **8.4.1.1 The Narrational Texture and Pattern of meals in Luke**

The use of the meal motif is noticeable in Luke. For Smith (1987:614) the meal motif “is one of his favorite literary devices”. There are seven meal scenes in Luke before the Last Supper, and two afterwards (LaVerdiere 1996:86). It is unwise to separate the Last Supper from the larger meal motif in Luke. The Last Supper may be the most important meal scene in Luke, but it is still part of a larger depiction of the meal motif. The meal motif should come as no surprise when the socio-economic context of early Roman Palestine is considered. Although authors such as Smith compare the meal motif of Luke to literature of the broader Hellenistic culture, the obvious point should not be overlooked: food was not a matter of leisure, but a matter of survival. Food security would have been a prime motive for the peasantry in early Roman Palestine (Hanson & Oakman 2008: Chapter 4 [Kindle edition]). The likely

impoverishment of the rural areas and villages<sup>142</sup> would make the plight of Lazarus (Lk 16:19–31) far more of a common feature than modern readers readily acknowledge. Lazarus, after all, did not desire the opulent trappings of the rich man, but simply “longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table” (Lk 16:21, NRSV). Food security was his only priority. Crossan & Reed (2001:176) comments that food represented the bulk of what could be dubbed as resources for the non-elite.

To be fair, the main economic issue was still access to land, since land gave access to produce in an agrarian economy. But an increased access to land was unlikely due to the control of the agricultural-military machinery of the Romans overlords and their clients (Crossan & Reed 2001:176). The status quo was unlikely to change without large scale revolution. But food was an important, and more attainable, resource that could be used and distributed. In other words, the use of food, and the meal motif, goes beyond nutrition and table fellowship. Food represents resources, and the use of resources in early Roman Palestine (just as land did not only represent a place to live, but also access to the economy). Both food, and the use and distribution of resources, were a matter of social justice then.

Here Luke comes to his own with the meal motif. Already in Luke 1:53 the connection between food, resources and power is introduced: “he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty” (Lk 1:53, NRSV). The proclamation of the Kingdom is intimately linked to the reversal of the social status quo where the rich are full, and the rest are hungry. Rather, the Kingdom breaks up this balance of power, and subverts the order of things. This thought is forcefully repeated in the blessings and woes in Luke 6: “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled” (Lk 6:21, NRSV); which is imminently contrasted with, “woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry” (Lk 6:25, NRSV). The appeal is not merely for an increase of food and resources so all could be full and satisfied. But both Luke 1:53 & 6:21,25 comment on the power discrepancy between those who have and those who have not, and makes it an issue of justice. Some are full

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<sup>142</sup> This impoverishment was due to the burden of taxation and tribute, increased debt, unequal competition with elite landholdings, as well as homelessness (§ 6.1–6.3).

because of their wealth — but their wealth is connected to how others are hungry. The rich are full, but their profitable actions are causing the poor to be hungry.

Several categories become evident when the connection between the meal motif and social conflict is considered in Luke:

#### 8.4.1.1.1 *The banquet as a metaphor for Kingdom abundance*

Luke considers the Kingdom to be a place of abundant resources. It is not a place with limited resources. Whereas the kingdoms of the world scrap and struggle for resources — and in the process trample on the vulnerable of society — resources are not scarce in the Kingdom. It evokes the Promised Land ideal (Numbers 13), where produce was of mythic quality and quantity. The Kingdom is depicted as a vast banquet with innumerable guests (and therefore with inordinate quantities of food): “Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God” (Lk 13:29, NRSV). This connection between the kingdom and a banquet is repeated in Luke 14:15 (NRSV): “One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, ‘Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!’”

This link between the Kingdom and food is repeated as well in Luke 22: “When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.’” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes’” (Lk 22:14–18, NRSV).<sup>143</sup> Here the abundance of the kingdom is symbolised by the bread and the wine, and ratified by the self-sacrificial ethic of Jesus. The symbols of the Last Supper become a reminder of the abundance of the Kingdom, and the moral imperative to “take this and *divide it among yourselves*” (italics mine).

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<sup>143</sup> The wording of Luke 22:14–18 also allows for an eschatological reading. There is a future aspect to the Kingdom banquet. In this sense, the table fellowship will be first realised with the Lord’s Supper, but will only be fully realised in the future (LaVerdiere 1996:90).

This link between abundance and the Kingdom of God, is a crucial concept in Luke. For Karris (1985:52), the Lukan meal motif demonstrates a willingness (and faithfulness) on God's part to feed his hungry creation. God is neither apathetic to his creation, nor to his people. And if God's fidelity provides abundant resources, it makes the fierce need to struggle and compete for resources redundant. The politically weak always suffer in such an arena of competition. But if God becomes the Father of all, by means of covenantal kinship, and all become kin in the household of God, then the hierarchical patronage patterns of the Roman and Herodian elite is undermined. God is now the ultimate patron and provider — and his provision is abundant. This necessitates a response of generosity among the recipients of the Kingdom. Negative and balanced reciprocity is not necessary — rather positive reciprocity is advocated as a social pattern: "Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Lk 6:37–38, NRSV).

Scarcity of resources is not a limiting factor in the Kingdom. The entry of people is not limited by what is available in the Kingdom. There is abundance in the Kingdom. Rather entry is granted on the basis of Abrahamic kinship:

Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.

(Lk 13:24–30, NRSV)

This thought is also repeated in Luke 14:15–24. Here moral imperatives become the main issue in the Kingdom (Marshall 1978:565). Evildoers will not enter the abundance of the Kingdom. The distribution and use of resources is not merely a matter of availability. Moral resolve determines how resources will be used. This is important, because the idea of Kingdom abundance might seem a bit abstract (and perhaps even irrelevant). It borders on positive thinking in the face of a dire economic situation in early Roman Palestine. But that would miss the point. The point that Luke is making is that the use of resources is very much a moral issue. It is a matter of justice. The banquet is not one day far off in the future, or a theocratic political ideal, but a vision of the earth under the kinship ethics of the Kingdom of God. When such an ethic is applied, the world may yet be a place of abundance. Everyone can join in this abundance in equal measure. The use of resources becomes a moral issue, because ethics determine if negative reciprocity (hoarding at the cost of others) or positive reciprocity (a lifestyle of generosity) is practiced as a social pattern. Positive reciprocity is encouraged because it is modelled by God: “For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk 11:10–13, NRSV).

Luke also makes it clear that the abundance of the Kingdom, and the distributive ethic it demands (in the form of positive reciprocity or generosity) is not only a matter of morality; it is backed with the very power of God. Perrin notices that there is a triptych of meal scenes in Luke that is firmly linked to the Last Supper (2013:496). What links the feeding of the 5000, the Last Supper and the Emmaus supper is how Jesus handles food: “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (Lk 24:30, NRSV). This pattern of taking, blessing and giving is repeated in all three narratives. And in all three narratives the power of God is present to multiply resources.<sup>144</sup> In the miraculous feeding of the 5000 (Lk

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<sup>144</sup> As Karris (1985:54) notes, the feeding pericope (Lk 9:10–17) indicates that the gift of food is fulfilled in the here and now. God is providing food in the place where there is severe

9:10–17) Jesus multiplies food<sup>145</sup> to feed to his hungry non-elite audience.<sup>146</sup> With the Last Supper, Jesus is empowered by God to ratify the new covenant by his self-sacrifice ethic. In the Emmaus narrative Jesus miraculously appears to his disciples and teaches them. In all these scenes a generous attitude is supplemented by miraculous increase.

#### 8.4.1.1.2 *The radical inclusion of sinners in the Kingdom banquet*

Another feature of the meal motif in Luke is the radical inclusion of sinners in the kingdom banquet (Lk 5:30-32; 7:34; 15:2; 19:7). What is surprising about these “sinners” is that they include tax collectors. Here the category of sinner includes those who are morally wicked, as well as those who are occupationally wicked (Crossan & Reed 2001:157). The tax collectors denote those who collaborated with the Romans, to the detriment of Judean and Galilean communities. They are not just wicked, but they are also proxies of those who actively oppresses communities.

So, although the ethical injunctions as a standard of Abrahamic covenantal kinship remains, the reach of the invitation to table fellowship is of an inclusive nature (Neyrey 1991:378). Even the wicked are invited to the abundance of the Kingdom. Ironically, we find Judas included in the Last Supper; yet he is not able to keep the ethical nature of giving in the Kingdom. Therefore, he falls under a curse (Lk 22:21-22). Luke 22:3–5 contrasts the money given to Judas, to the body and blood given by Jesus. By taking this money he becomes a client to the Judean priestly elite — and thereby denies the patronage of God. He loses his place in the Kingdom due to

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scarcity of food — the desert. Poon (2003:224–230) comments that feeding pericope is an illustration of the abundance of the Kingdom: “The Lucan Feeding Miracle is therefore a story about superabundant table fellowship”.

<sup>145</sup> In reference to the Markan account of the feeding story (Mk 6:38–42), Oakman notes the political significance of the loaves and the fishes. The amount of food correlates to the daily subsistence meal for a peasant family, and loaves and fishes also refer to two of the major productive resources of Galilee (Oakman 2012:72).

<sup>146</sup> Blomberg (2005:103) comments on the related passage in Mark 6:30–44: “One cannot help but think of God’s provision of manna in olden times (Exodus 16) and the Jewish tradition of the Messiah coming as a new Moses, once again bringing an abundance of bread in the wilderness”.

his greed. He rejects Abrahamic covenantal kinship — even though he participates in the Last Supper.

#### 8.4.1.1.3. *The radical inclusion of social outcasts in the Kingdom banquet*

More to the point: radical inclusion to Kingdom abundance also extends to social outcasts. The social outcast refers to the most vulnerable and weakest part of society. Social outcasts are not desirable to be associated with. They cannot reciprocate what they are given. Nothing emphasises the point of positive reciprocity (or generosity) more than this inclusion of social outcasts to the Kingdom banquet. The social outcasts cannot reciprocate this generosity in any way. Green (1997:557) calls this type of generosity an “uncalculating generosity”. They are invited purely on the basis of generosity.

Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

(Lk 14:16–24, NRSV)

In this passage the familiarity of those to whom such an invite is balanced reciprocity (they feel they deserve to be there) is indicted. Karris (1985:63) argues that the motif behind the characters’ balanced and negative reciprocity lies in the way they

perceive food. For them, food and meals is a way of celebrating self. But this attitude neglects the principle that food is a gift from God. It requires a response of gratitude and generosity, not selfishness. Which leads to the following category of the meal motif in Luke.

#### 8.4.1.1.4 *The kingdom banquet as an indictment of negative reciprocity.*

Another strong feature of Luke is how the meal motif is used as commentary on the opponents of Jesus. Here the Pharisees and scribes (Lk 7:36–50; 11:37–54; 14:1–24) play a more central role as opponents of Jesus (as opposed to the priestly elite in the Jerusalem narrative). For the Pharisees, the source of offence in each of the scenes is transgression of ritual purity (and perceived boundary markers). In Luke 7:36–50, a woman described as a sinner gives inappropriate and personal attention to Jesus by weeping over his feet, washing it with expensive oil, and drying it with her hair. This uncomfortable contact transgresses purity boundaries in terms of the separation of the righteous and sinners, but also women and men: “Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner’” (Lk 7:39, NRSV). In Luke 11:37–54, the Pharisees are astounded that Jesus does not observe ritual purity by first washing his hands. In Luke 14:1–24, the matter is again transgression of ritual purity (and boundary markers) by doing work on the Sabbath. Jesus heals a man with dropsy, to the chagrin of the Pharisees.

Jesus does not show obeisance to the ritual purity as prescribed by the Pharisees and scribes (McKnight 1999:41–49). Much can be made of this in terms of how holiness was defined by the Jesus movement as inclusive (or merciful), compared to exclusive holiness practiced among concurrent social sects:

In short, Jesus’ practice of table fellowship and his teaching concerning issues related to table fellowship contravened the understanding of Israel as a holy, separated community. In this context, table fellowship cannot be described simply as festive celebration and acceptance, but as a political act of national significance: to advocate and practice a different

form of table fellowship was to protest against the present structures of Israel. Moreover, there was more than protest—an alternative program was advocated for the people of God in their historical existence.

(Borg 1984:120–121)

And this “alternative program” advocated a social pattern that went beyond attacking the exclusive definition of holiness in the preparation and partaking of meals. Keeping in mind the distributive ethic of the Jesus movement concerning food and resources, the common link between the meal narratives with the Pharisees is the indictment of their practice of negative reciprocity. In Luke 7:36–50, Jesus answers the criticism of Simon by noticing that he did not obey the common social practice of anointing Jesus’ head. Rather the despised woman demonstrated positive reciprocity by pouring expensive ointment on his feet. Jesus proceeds to give the parable of the creditors to make a point:

Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little”.

(Lk 7:44–47, NRSV)

The generosity of the Kingdom (expressed as forgiveness here) is reciprocated by the woman with generosity. Simon is bound by balanced or negative reciprocity — he has been forgiven little, and gives little as well. In Luke 11:37–54, after ignoring the ritual custom of hand washing, Jesus attacks the negative reciprocity of the Pharisees and scribes: “Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them” (Lk 11:46, NRSV). Here other people are placed under heavy burdens (perhaps of a religious and ethical nature), yet the flow of obligation is only in one direction. The scribes do not help those who are breaking under the burden (Marshall 1978:500).

Lastly, in Luke 14:1–24, the abundance of the Kingdom is expressed in the healing of the man. However, it offended the perception around ritual purity on a Sabbath. Here Luke presents the obligations around the Sabbath as a hindrance to the positive reciprocity of the Kingdom. It moves Jesus to comment on the balanced reciprocity system of honour with the vying for seats of honour with meals (Neyrey 1991:379). The question with the allocation of the seats of honour is who deserves such seats. Jesus suggests a subversive practice of positive reciprocity — they should invite those that cannot return the favour. “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid” (Lk 14:12, NRSV). Jesus moves onto the parable of the great dinner, and comments that those who became familiar (because they deserve to be invited according to balance reciprocity) are rejected for those who do not deserve to be there. Positive reciprocity is given to the social outcast in the spirit of generosity: “Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame” (Lk 14:21, NRSV).

#### 8.4.2 SUMMARY OF THE DOMAIN OF ECONOMICS AND THE LAST SUPPER

The issue of reciprocity is brought up with the Last Supper: “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” (Lk 22:19, NRSV). The generosity (or positive reciprocity) of Jesus is encapsulated in his self-sacrificial ethic. And this self-sacrificial ethic (“my body”, Lk 22:19 [NRSV]) demonstrates the generosity of the Kingdom (“given thanks”, Lk 22:19 [NRSV]) concerning resources (“loaf of bread”). As far as Luke is concerned, the social domain of economics should be approached with a firm attitude of generosity. This positive reciprocity should go beyond what people are deemed to deserve, and should especially look after the weak and vulnerable. The burden falls on those who have (what the Kingdom has granted to them) to set a social pattern of generosity (as Jesus did). This approach does not advocate a certain programme and system, but rather speaks of an inner attitude that seeks the opportunity to give and to bless — whether the giving consists of spiritual or material blessing. Since there is an abundance of resources in the

Kingdom, and a radical inclusion of sinners and outcasts is possible in the Kingdom, generosity becomes a clear social pattern to be emulated.

There is one puzzling saying in this regard in the Last Supper:

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”. 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. 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”. They said, “Lord, look, here are two swords”. He replied, “It is enough”.

(Lk 22:35–38, NRSV)

This section within the discourse of the Last Supper seems to contradict a certain commensality, and positive reciprocity, implied with the rest of the meal motif in Luke. Even more so, it directly contradicts the comparative commands given in Luke 9:2–3 & 10:3–4. The discourse here hinges though on the term “but now” (ἀλλὰ νῦν, NA<sup>27</sup>). This term indicates a change in circumstances towards a time of greater hostility towards the apostles and the Jesus movement (Garland 2012:870). The proclamation of the Kingdom, and the social patterns that it perpetuates, will not be received well everywhere. It will meet social and cultural resistance since it subverts existing social patterns and power hierarchies. The discourse here encourages wisdom in the midst of resistance, without resorting to violence (Garland 2012:871), or abandoning the ideal of the Kingdom abundance (“When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “No, not a thing”).

## **8.5 CULTURE AND THE LAST SUPPER IN LUKE: TABLE FELLOWSHIP AND THE LORD’S SUPPER**

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it”. They asked him,

“Where do you want us to make preparations for it?” “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 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?’” He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there”. So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

(Lk 22:7–13, NRSV)

### 8.5.1 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE HOUSEHOLD IN LUKE

#### 8.5.1.1 Agricultural Based, Industrial, and Technological Economic Exchange Systems

Elliott (1991:88–120) makes a compelling argument that Luke advocates for the household to replace the Temple as the dominant social institution.<sup>147</sup> As discussed in Chapter 5 (§ 5.3), Luke is ambivalent towards the Temple and its position in early Roman Palestine. The Temple was unparalleled in its religious, cultural and social influence in early Roman Palestine. As a cultural symbol of Judaism, (as well Judea as a nation), it provided cultural and social legitimisation that empowered various social groups (§ 5.2). Luke criticises what the abuse of this social power did to the inherent meaning of the Temple; devolving it to a den of robbers (Lk 19:45–46). This led to the declaration of destruction of the Temple (Lk 21:5–6). However, cultural symbolism requires that something embodies the ideals of a particular social group. A cultural vacuum is soon filled. The question is then: if the Temple lost its cultural

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<sup>147</sup> Elliott (1991:89) defines institution as follows: “Institutions comprise social associations or processes which are highly organized, systematized in terms of roles, relationships, and responsibilities, and stable over time. As ‘institutions’ in the formal sociological sense, the Temple and the Household entail not simply different spaces for worship or residence, respectively, but differently organized sectors and systems of social life”.

influence and power among the Jesus movement — what replaced it? What provided subcultural<sup>148</sup> momentum to the ideologies of the Jesus movement?

It is argued here that the household played a particular important role as a social institution, and more particular, table fellowship (in the form of the Last Supper) as a subcultural symbol for the Jesus movement. The Last Supper was replicated by the Jesus movement as a dominant subcultural symbol in their own ranks. Luke 22:7–13 places the Last Supper within a house, and the narrative indicates a format of table fellowship. However, the key phrase that indicates that the Last Supper was seen as a cultural (and religious) symbol to be perpetuated is: “Do this in remembrance of me” (Lk 22:19, NRSV). For Luke, the Last Supper was not meant as merely a farewell supper. It was meant to be repeated, just as the Passover was repeated. The bread and the wine embodied more than just food to be shared, more than resources that ought to be distributed, it contained covenantal and cultural symbols that were filled with meaning for the Jesus movement. It suggested a way of living. As in the case of the cultural value of the Temple in early Roman Palestine, the argument is not that the Last Supper was exclusively a cultural symbol separated from its religious implications. Rather the argument is that it was a subcultural symbol among the Jesus movement, that was filled with meaning, and helped to symbolise and perpetuate their particular ideology.

For Elliot, the contrast between the household and the Temple in Luke is appropriate, because the household embodies alternative social values to the Temple in early Roman Palestine. The household becomes a prime Lukan metaphor for the “social life in the Kingdom of God” (1991:117).<sup>149</sup> Now, the household has

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<sup>148</sup> The word subcultural is used in the case of table fellowship instead of cultural (as in the case of the Temple). For definition of subculture refer to § 5.1. As argued in chapter 5 (§ 5.2), the Temple was a cultural symbol on a macro scale. It intersected with various social domains, and provided symbolic meaning the spoke to the whole of Judaism and early Roman Palestine. However, table fellowship was filled with a particular cultural meaning for a smaller social group (who vied with other social groups for influence in early Roman Palestine) — hence the use of subcultural to denote the use of table fellowship. But, where the Jesus movement became a dominant religious force in a particular society, table fellowship inevitably also became a dominant cultural symbol.

<sup>149</sup> Elliott (1991:103–104) references the following passages in Luke-Acts as textual evidence for the statement that the household was a prime metaphor for Luke: The

already been implied in this chapter with the discussion on the ratification of Abrahamic covenantal kinship in the Last Supper (§ 8.3.1.1). The household as a metaphor reinforces the notion that God is a generous and merciful Father (Lk 2:49; 6:36; 9:36; 10:21–22; 11:1, 13; 12:30, 32; 33:29, 42; 23:34, 46; 24:49). A father was the head of the household in patriarchal cultures such as Judea, and his kin lived in the household. For Elliot, the household was an apt metaphor since it embodied the central value of covenantal relationship between humans and God, as well as with each other. More so, it challenged the centralisation of power and resources in the Temple hierarchy system, since the household embodies the diffusion of power and sharing of resources. It is a return to the house of prayer, and a rejection of the den of robbers (Lk 19:46).

Should the social concepts of kinship, the household and table fellowship be put in relation with each other, it could be depicted as follows: kinship is a social domain,<sup>150</sup> and the household is a social institution.<sup>151</sup> And it is argued here that table fellowship

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household was the place of the proclamation of the gospel, the experience of forgiveness of sins, salvation and the presence of the Spirit: Luke 1:39–56; 5:17–26; 7:36–50; 8:38–39, 49–56; 9:4; 10:5–7; 12:3; 15:11–32; 18:14; 19:1–10; Acts 2:1–42; 5:42; 10:1–48; 11:14–15; 16:25–34; 18:7–8; 22:16 (cf. 9:19). The household is given as the place for teaching: Luke 7:36–50; 10:38–42; 11:37–52; 14:1–24; 22:24–38; Acts 2:42; 5:42; 18:11; 20:7–12, 20; 28:30–31. The household provides the location for healing: Luke 4:38–41; 5:18–26; 7:1–10; 8:4–56; Acts 9:10–19, 32–35, 36–43; 20:7–12; 28:7–10. Prophecy occurs in the household: Acts 2:1–21; 21:8–14. Revelations and visions are received in the household: Luke 1:26–38; 24:28–35; Acts 1:13–26; 9:10–19; 10:1–8, 9–23; 11:13–14; 13:2; 18:7–10. The recognition of the resurrected Christ occurs in the household: Luke 24:28–32. The household is connected with the redefining the family of Jesus: Luke 8:19–21. The household is the place of hospitality and lodging: Luke 19:1–10; Acts 9:10–19, 43; 10:6; 12:12–17; 16:15,34; 17:5; 18:7; 21:8,16; (27:3); 28:7–10,13–14. Hospitality of meals and dining sociality occurs in the household: Luke 5:29–39; 7:36–50; 10:38–42; 11:37–52; 14:1–24; cf. 15:2; 22:7–38; 24:28–32, 36–49; Acts 9:19; 10:1–11:18; 16:34. People worship in the household: (prayer, praise, fasting, Passover meal, baptism. Lord’s Supper): Luke 1:39–56; 22:7–38; 24:28–35; Acts 1:14; 2:46–47; 4:23–31; 9:10–19; 10:1–8; 12:12; 13:2; 16:33; 20:7–10. The sharing property and distribution of goods to the needy is connected with the household: Luke 19:1–10; Acts 2:44–45; 4:34–37; 6:1–6; 9:36–42; 10:1–2; cf. 20:34–35.

<sup>150</sup> The definition of Hanson and Oakman for social domain is used consistently in this dissertation: “An institutional system or constellation of social institutions. Ever society manifests the domains of politics, kinship, economics and religion, but in different configurations and relationships” (2008: Glossary 3 [Kindle edition]).

<sup>151</sup> Elliott (1991:89) defines institution as follows: “Institutions comprise social associations or processes which are highly organized, systematized in terms of roles, relationships, and responsibilities, and stable over time. As ‘institutions’ in the formal sociological sense, the

(in the form of Lord's Supper) is a cultural symbol (§ 5.1) that perpetuated covenantal kinship and the household of faith. McKnight (1999:45) notices with the narratives of the Last Supper that the social impact of table fellowship is in full display. "The act in and of itself revealed friendship, acceptance, and some measure of equality. One did not eat with a person who was incompatible with one's vision for Israel". As a cultural symbol for the Jesus movement, table fellowship held the same potential as the Temple — but it was also a "decisive alternative according to Luke. Membership ... involves constant conflict and critique of" the Temple (Elliott 1991:90). In contrast to the centralised and hierarchical nature of the Temple, the household perpetuates the "community of brothers and sisters in the faith, social relations were intimate, inclusive and governed by the reciprocity characteristic of family and friends. In this private sphere, social (including religious) life was self-contained and economically self-supporting. Resources were not directed under compulsion to a distant centre, and redistributed according to the interest of those in power, but were shared directly according to availability and need" (Elliott 1991:114).<sup>152</sup>

Table fellowship culturally reinforced the ideal of kinship, as embodied by the social institution of the household. It constantly evoked the ideal of Abrahamic kinship. As seen through the theological perspective of Luke "the new Household of Jesus Messiah, not the Temple, constitutes the continuing dwelling place of the Spirit, Christianity's enduring bond with the house of Abraham in whose posterity 'all the families of the earth will be blessed'" (Elliott 1991:117).

### 8.5.2 SUMMARY OF THE DOMAIN OF CULTURE AND THE LAST SUPPER

The Last Supper depicted a renewal of an older fictive kinship ideal, as embodied by the Abrahamic covenant. Kinship is represented symbolically by the household, and table fellowship symbolises the social relationships of equality, and intimacy, as

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Temple and the Household entail not simply different spaces for worship or residence, respectively, but differently organized sectors and systems of social life".

<sup>152</sup> Elliot provides the following references from Luke-Acts for his statement: Lk 6:3–36; 11:5–13; 12:33; 15:3–32; 18:22; 19:1–10; Ac 2:44–47; 5:32–37; 6:16.

brother and sisters in the faith, and encouraged a positive and generous reciprocity. It stood in contrast to the highly centralised and hierarchical social system, as the Temple came to symbolise. By practising table fellowship of the Last Supper (in the format of the Lord's Supper) the remembrance of Jesus was a covenantal, social and political act, by which the life, example and teachings of Jesus were underlined. In short, it replaced the Temple as a pre-eminent cultural symbol for the Jesus movement. And the power of a cultural symbol is to unify a social group, and to provide symbolic vehicles by which the meaning and values ascribes to the symbols, can be perpetuated and imparted.

## 8.6 POLITICS AND THE LAST SUPPER IN LUKE: MESSIANIC SERVANTHOOD

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "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, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. "You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, 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.

(Lk 22:24–30, NRSV)

### 8.6.1 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEXTURE OF THE DISPUTE OF GREATNESS

#### 8.6.1.1 Dyadic and Legal Contracts and Agreements

A significant portion of the discourse in Luke 22 is devoted to the question of greatness. Whereas a simple reading of Luke 22:24–30 may imply a teaching on humility, more must be extrapolated from the text. The occasion which prompts this particular discourse is the dispute (φιλονεικία, NA<sup>27</sup>) about whom of the apostles should be considered the greatest (μείζων, NA<sup>27</sup>). Luke immediately compares the

dispute to the struggle for honour among Gentile kings and their clients (Lk 22:25). The Gentile kings in the pericope most likely refers to the Greco-Roman elite (Green 1997:768). In other words, Luke implies that the apostles were seeking to replicate the Roman patron-client system in some way. It is extremely ironic that the reach of the Roman patronage system penetrated even this charged moment of the farewell meal of Jesus. But then it points to the overwhelming reality of Roman patronage. This tussle for honour among the apostles were likely to be encouraged by the social etiquette of the Roman banquet (Smith 1987:620):

At any formal meal in a Greek or Roman setting, the diners reclined around a central axis, the most common arrangement being that of the “triclinium,” whereby the couches were arranged in a u-shaped formation around a central table. All such traditional arrangements (and there were others) also had traditional rankings assigned, so that one's position at the table indicated one's rank relative to that of the other guests. This was a regular factor that always had to be addressed at a formal meal: who is to be assigned the position of honor, the second position, and so on around the room.

Patronage was the dominant social value that drove politics in early Roman Palestine, and the Roman banquet reinforced the hierarchal status quo. However, Jesus did not reject the social pattern of patronage: after all he promises to “confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, 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” (Lk 22:29–30, NRSV). The use of terms like “confer”, “kingdom”, “eat and drink at my table” conveys patronage. But in the light of the political instability in early Roman Palestine, a different social pattern for patronage is suggested here. Patronage is not eliminated among the Jesus movement, but the identity of the patron, and the obligation of the client changes. The Father becomes the patron, and the followers of Jesus become the clients. This dramatically undercuts the power position of human patrons. They too are dependent on the patronage of God. They too are clients of God; just as other members of the Jesus movement are clients of God. They too share in their client obligations towards God. At best, they can become brokers of the Kingdom — just as Jesus confers a Kingdom to them (as it

was conferred to him). They become bearers of the Kingdom as they proclaim inclusive access to the Kingdom. This is a statement of egalitarianism and breaks down the hierarchical politics of early Roman Palestine.

Moxnes (1991:265) makes a strong argument that patronage holds the key to Luke's view on the use of resources. Since the Father is the patron of all, the power relations between individuals themselves are undermined and redefined. The wealthy cannot use their generosity (as espoused by table fellowship and giving) to gain honour and clients, and the poor are to receive from those who have surplus, without binding themselves into client relationships. Those with surplus are obligated to give as part of their client loyalty to God. The poor are obligated to worship God, and not to transfer their loyalty to the wealthy who give generously. Here the instruction of Luke 22:26–27 agrees with this inversion of roles in the Kingdom. The greatest must become the youngest, the leader must become the servant — because this Kingdom has been conferred by the Father.

#### **8.6.1.2 The Farewell Address**

This instruction (Lk 22:26) is further underlined by the notion that the Last Supper served as a farewell address (LaVerdiere 1996:90). “This was the last meal he would share *with them*” (Marshall 1980:80). The farewell address explains how “the prediction of Judas's betrayal and the dispute over greatness” fits into Luke 22 (Kurz 1985:251). The farewell address finalises the speaker's concerns in the face of impending death. The care of those who remain, the regulation of discipleship, and the transfer of authority is of particular interest in the farewell address (Kurz 1985:254, 258). What this means is that Luke 22:24–30 is not calming remarks following a squabble, but a strong injunction on the care of the Jesus movement after the death of Jesus, and how they are to use the authority of the Kingdom that is now conferred to them. As a foil to the discourse of Luke 22:24–30, the betrayal of Judas demonstrates the opposite of this new pattern of covenantal patronage: “But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table” (Lk 22:21, NRSV). At this point of the narrative, Judas already broke covenantal kinship and sought the patronage of the Judean elite (Lk 22:1–6). This change of patronage is strongly condemned as betrayal as it facilitates the arrest of Jesus. Two types of uses of

patronage are presented here then: the type of patronage where “the kings of the Gentiles lord (κυριεύουσιν, NA<sup>27</sup>) it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors” (Lk 22:25, NRSV). The other type of patronage is where the authority conferred on the apostles should be used to serve. They will “eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:30, NRSV); but it is still with the purpose to serve. It is the latter type of ethical patronage that Judas is unable to follow, and it is the first type of Roman patronage that Jesus instructs the apostles to avoid.

## 8.6.2 THE IDEOLOGICAL TEXTURE OF SERVING IN THE LAST SUPPER

### 8.6.2.1 Ideology of Power in the discourse of the text

This subversion of Roman patronage contains a strong ideological texture, because it addresses the issue of power; and comments strongly on the use of power in early Roman Palestine. Service is central to the Lukan depiction of the Last Supper (Smith 1987:630). Luke portrays Jesus as a messiah in Luke 22. He has received a kingdom, and he is conferring the Kingdom, but equally his messianic ethic is vastly different from the “Gentile kings” (Lk 22:25). He does not “lord it over them”, nor are his apostles to lord it over others (Neyrey 1991:380). Power and authority is not granted to gain honour and acquire power. Rather a politics of self-sacrifice and humility is advocated. The covenantal action of bread and wine is made personal. “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me”. 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” (Lk 22:19–20, NRSV). This development makes the covenantal actions personal, but also makes it intimate as the ultimate self-sacrifice. To sacrifice oneself for the well-being of others, is defined as the very fabric of covenantal actions. This messianic self-sacrifice becomes the bedrock of power and authority in the political understanding of Luke. It is the essence of servanthood. Sacrifice is required because of the inversion of primacy in the Kingdom. The greatest is not the most important. Rather the youngest and the servant is the most important. The most vulnerable and the weakest become the greatest asset in the Kingdom since God is merciful by nature. “Be merciful, just as your Father is

merciful” (Lk 6:36, NRSV). Sacrifice is not necessary for the benefit of those that can help themselves, but it is very necessary for the weak, poor, outcast and vulnerable. It is they that should be served especially, not only the powerful and self-sufficient. The politics of Luke is a politics of compassion.

Therefore, the Messiah comes “as one who serves” (εἶμι ὡς ὁ διακονῶν, Lk 22:27, NA<sup>27</sup>). The imagery here of service and servanthood has a rich tradition and trajectory in the Bible and other writings in the ancient world. But it can offer a diverse range of meaning as well. In this case the text uses the word διακονέω. The use of διακονέω in the Gospel of Luke follows two themes. In the first place it is used as a description for menial tasks — but nonetheless tasks that serve the household. In the second place it is descriptive of an attitude that the disciples should foster in the Kingdom, especially when it comes to the relative position of oneself within the Kingdom. In Luke 4:39, Jesus heals Simon’s mother in law: “Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve (διηκόνει, NA<sup>27</sup>) them” (NRSV). Her service may point to the social importance of hospitality; but on a deeper level may also indicate service as a response to the Kingdom. Luke 8:3 depicts serving as the generosity of Joanna, Susanna and others to the fictive household of faith: “and Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided (διηκόνουσιν, NA<sup>27</sup>) for them out of their resources” (NRSV). Again a certain response to the Kingdom is modelled by these women.

In Luke 12:35–37 and 17:7–10, serving becomes a more central ethical instruction. Serving should be an attitude in response to the coming of the Kingdom. It is no longer implied, but assumed as an obvious social pattern: “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve (διακονήσῃ, NA<sup>27</sup>) them” (Lk 12:35–37, NRSV). In both Luke 12:35–37 and 17:7–10 the location for serving is the household.

This is apt when the connection between the Last Supper and covenantal kinship, as well as the cultural importance of table fellowship is considered. Collins argues that in a broader Hellenistic understanding, a δῖάκονος refers to someone who acts as a subordinate go-between (Collins 1990:77). In other words, a δῖάκονος is not always linked to a menial social status, but rather refers to someone who is given authority to handle tasks on behalf of someone with even a higher authority. Therefore, the conferring of the Kingdom makes the apostles servants, not Gentile kings. They are tasked with serving in the authority they have been given, since that authority comes from the ὁ δῖάκονων.

However, Luke does place an emphasis on the menial side of being a δῖάκονος. Where Luke 12:35–37 links with the obligation of serving in the household, Luke 17:7–10 adds humility to the equation. It is not enough to serve. There is a self-identification as worthless slaves. There is sacrifice involved. This surprising self-identification is depicted as a conviction of one’s relative social status in the Kingdom. The slaves are ordered to serve, but also serve because that’s what they simply ought to do.

Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”? Would you not rather say to him, “Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve (δῖάκόνει, NA<sup>27</sup>) me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink”? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, “We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!”

(Lk 17:7–10, NRSV)

This menial side of household tasks is depicted by the petulance of Martha: “But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work (δῖάκονεῖν, NA<sup>27</sup>) by myself?” (Lk 10:40, NRSV). The ὁ δῖάκονων is in contrast to the “kings of the Gentiles”. It connects with the “youngest” who would serve “the greatest” (Collins

1990:246). This does not suggest that Jesus stood up and played waiter during the Last Supper — but it speaks of an inner attitude towards power and the use of authority. The apostles, and indeed Jesus, are not lacking authority or power. A kingdom has been conferred. They are not serving because they are powerless, or forced to do so by the Roman and Judean elite. They are serving because that is what societal breakdown requires, but also because that is what the Kingdom obliges them to do.

For Collins, concepts around the *διάκονος* are complicated, and it becomes very difficult to pin it down to a single sentence that would fairly describe the use of the word in Greek and New Testament writings. But he notes that it may be somewhat encapsulated as service where “responsibilities are works of love and service of immense variety; all together and singly they are indeed, a ‘sacred obligation’” (Collins 1990:258). Again this is fitting when the discussion around politics, patronage and the Jesus movement is considered. The apostles may have received a kingdom, and authority may have been transferred to them; but it is all in the spirit of service. The Messiah comes to serve, so the apostles should go and serve. Authority without service results in the *ἀύστηρός* Throne Claimant. Authority, leadership, humility and service cannot be separated in the Kingdom.

### 8.6.3 SUMMARY OF THE DOMAIN OF POLITICS AND THE LAST SUPPER

Instead of being *ἀύστηρός* rulers, members of the Jesus movement are to take the status of the *διάκονος*. This view does not deny patronage, but it subverts it. It adds humility and self-sacrifice to politics. This is based on the conferring of the Kingdom by the Father to the sons and daughters of Abraham. God is the great patron, and since Jesus sets the example of service, members of the Jesus movement should follow it. The outsider — especially the weak and the outcast — becomes important. God is merciful, and so should the sons and daughters of Abraham be merciful.

In this political ethic, sacrifice plays an important role. This is in contrast with the *ἀύστηρός* rulers, who are engaged in an endless tussle for honour. Such an ethic is not suitable among those that have received a Kingdom. If they are to “eat and drink

at my table in my kingdom”, and “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:29–30, NRSV), then they are also to reflect the sacrificial ethic of Jesus, and become servants.

Luke’s perspective here does not suggest a type of political system, rather it promotes a certain ethic in politics. Political systems are to serve people, and they are to embody humility.

## **8.7 CONCLUSION**

The Last Supper contain a synopsis of the positive and alternative social practices advocated by Luke. These social patterns include table fellowship, generosity with material and spiritual resources, as well as service. These patterns were not meant primarily as boundary markers among the Jesus movement. The patterns were not for the benefit or identification of members only. But these social patterns pointed to an agenda or method to include those on the “outside” as well. It went beyond social, ethnic, gender and class divisions. It was universal in scope. It addressed the social conflict that afflicted the Judean and Galilean social landscape. It aimed to convey the values and vision of what an alternative society would be like for the Jesus movement. It embodied ideals of who that renewed Israel would become.

However, the social power of the Jesus movement was not to be found in the mere practice of these social patterns. After all, many other social sects in early Roman Palestine were likely to subscribe to the ethic of these social patterns as well. What made these patterns so powerful was the ideologies and values that supported and motivated these social patterns. A replication of these social patterns without the meaning that Luke ascribed to it, would render it void of the social and ideological power that the Jesus movement generated.

These foundational ideologies were startling in contrast with the orthodoxy of early Roman Palestine. It envisioned a very different sort of society. Streett (2013:1) may be correct when he postulates that the Lord’s Supper later became a form of hidden discourse in the larger Roman empire; it embodied a subversive praxis. The seed of that subversive pattern is the covenantal kinship that the Last Supper promoted. The

vision that the Last Supper proclaimed was a theological one, and a covenantal one at that. This covenantal view provided the religious authority that fuelled the social patterns of the Jesus movement. And this covenantal view sought to include the outsider into the household of faith. All who partake in the faith are brothers and sisters in the faith. And this kinship is universal, egalitarian and inclusive in its focus. It is Abrahamic. It tries not to exclude, but to include whosoever into the household of faith. It forgives enemies, and includes them as brothers and sisters. It reaches out to the outcast and the weak to draw them into table fellowship. This inclusivity is not for the purpose of power and honour, but because of the generosity and mercy of the Father of the Household.

A self-sacrificial ethic is demonstrated by generosity, and the distribution of material and spiritual resources, even (or especially) to the weak and the vulnerable: "Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys" (Lk 12:33, NRSV). This is possible because the Kingdom invites people into the abundance of God. The Promised Land overflows with milk and honey. God is depicted as the great Father who is seeking to include all into his family. But equally God is the great patron who bountifully provides for those who ask. Resources are not to be centrally hoarded, and used at the cost of others. But rather table fellowship becomes the cultural symbol of the abundance, forgiveness and mercy of the Kingdom. The outsider and the outcast should be invited, since they too are part of the invitation to Abrahamic kinship. Generosity should become a lifestyle, with a special focus on those who are needy. It should be noted that in early Roman Palestine, the needy were large portions of an entire class. Leadership, social justice and the distribution of resources would be for both communities on a smaller scale, but also for societies on a larger scale. All of this is founded on a covenantal and public theology of covenant. God is a merciful Father who seeks to bless the entire earth through families of faith. And so the household of faith should seek to bless others.

This changes the stagnant human political dynamics in the Roman empire. Both the rich and the poor are dependent on God. The one who has resources should generously give as worship unto God, and the one who receives, should receive help

with thanksgiving to God. In this inclusive, covenantal, generous and familial society, politics becomes a matter of service — where the importance of the weak and vulnerable is elevated. Leaders should not reject being given power and authority, but they should lead with the humble intent of service. They should not desire to replicate the lifestyle of Caesar, or seek his approval, but seek to replicate the lifestyle of ὁ δὲ διακονῶν. This Lukan prophetic vision advocates a radically alternative society. It breaks down hierarchy and the concentration of power in the hands of few. It follows a bottom-up approach instead of a top-down approach. The Kingdom is conferred to representatives of the non-elite, and they are given the instruction to serve the household of faith. Power dynamics of Roman patronage is replaced with reciprocity between family members. Those who have been forgiven much, should love much.

## **CHAPTER 9: SYNTHESIS AND ILLUSTRATION. LUKE'S PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL CONFLICT AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH**

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

(Lk 24:30–32, NRSV)

This dissertation attempts to examine Luke's theological perspective of the phenomenon of social conflict in early Roman Palestine. Social conflict theory serves as a starting point to the research question, and the interplay of coercion and power relationships between various groupings in early Roman Palestine is continually described (§ 1). This interplay of coercion and power relationships develop because of the existence of various power groupings in a society. Power groups may be of a political, economic, religious or ethnic nature. In particular, the contrasts between the elite and non-elite is of concern. The dissertation briefly describes the ideologies of the elite and the non-elite in the various social domains in early Roman Palestine, and examine the role of these various ideologies on the escalating conflict. It is acknowledged that in the process, the categories of the social domains may become too clinical — social domains were more embedded and overlapping than the structure of the dissertation allows for (§ 3.4). Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the model utilised for this aim (the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine) is a hypothetical, and simplified, representation of social reality in early Roman Palestine — it is not social reality itself. However, the model (and the ideologies it depicts) offers a heuristic tool to examine conflicting ideologies between the Judean elite and non-elite, and how those ideologies are reflected as flash points in Luke.

The research question seeks to examine the interaction between Lukan prophetic discourse and social conflict in early Roman Palestine (§ 1.5). The question is asked: how did Lukan discourse depict a particular understanding of the renewal of Israel;

and how did this discourse of renewal interact with the elite/non-elite socio-political environment of early Roman Palestine? In order to answer this question, the scope of research was limited to Lukan prophetic discourse during the Jerusalem aspect of the ministry of Jesus. Furthermore, building on the first set of questions: how was that prophetic discourse applied in early Roman Palestine? This creates the question of how the early Jerusalem church develop various social patterns to address social conflict.

In essence, an effort is made to examine Luke's theological perspective concerning social conflict in early Roman Palestine.

### **9.1 SYNTHESIS: LUKAN PROPHETIC DISCOURSE IN JERUSALEM AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE**

A line of reasoning is followed throughout this dissertation, whereby conflicting ideologies of the elite and non-elite in the various social domains are applied as a heuristic tool to examine social conflict in Jerusalem according to Luke (§ 3.3). This was done by means of the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013). Social domains were separated (politics, culture, economics and religion), and pericopes in Luke 19–22 were identified that interact with the elite/non-elite ideologies in each of these domains. Furthermore, a hierarchy of social domains was followed according to elite interest (politics-culture-economics-religion). This hierarchy was followed to highlight Luke's critique on the Judean elite.

The model provides a heuristic tool by which to identify and categorise applicable and appropriate pericopes in Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem. However, exegesis followed the method and philosophy of socio-rhetorical criticism. In the process, a picture developed of Luke's critique on elite Judean politics and ideology (Chapter 4–7). In contrast, the discourse of the Last Supper (Lk 22:7–35) provides insight into the positive ideologies and social patterns proposed by Luke for social cohesion. The Last Supper is discussed in Chapter 8 as a synopsis of the social view of Luke. Examples are given from the rest of Luke where appropriate. However, in Chapter 8 the social hierarchy is followed from the non-elite point of view (religion-economics-

culture-politics). This is done to highlight the non-elite societal ideals for early Roman Palestine, and compare it to the Lukan text.

Addendum D summarises the exegetical findings by means of a table. For Luke, a covenantal perspective ought to drive social dynamics. The basis of society in early Roman Palestine is the covenantal history of Israel. It is covenant that provides social cohesion and prosperity. In particular, the covenant of Abraham, Moses and Jeremiah is of importance to Luke. For Luke, a renewed Israel also means a restored Israel, according to the foundational line of the salvation history of Israel. Luke does not hesitate to reconfigure and recontextualise the covenantal history of Israel into the person and ministry of Jesus.

### 9.1.1 LUKE'S CRITIQUE OF THE JUDEAN ELITE IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

For Luke, the Judean elite perceived society from a human perspective. This created a quandary for the Judean elite. They were the political and priestly elite; yet it was difficult to reconcile the political and ethical demands in early Roman Palestine. Rather, they chose to fear people, instead of fearing God. They embraced Roman and Herodian patronage, instead of the patronage of God. They became self-righteous, and sought to justify themselves in front of others.

Since they chose to be bound to Roman patronage, they were also bound to demands of their ἀύστηρός patrons. Roman patronage became a harsh and endless demand for more resource and more honour. The Judean elite were caught themselves into this cynical cycle of performance. Non-performance ended in punishment. Sufficient performance resulted in more demands. The social cost of such policies did not matter. What belonged to Caesar, had to be rendered to Caesar. In such an environment, extractive economics policies probably thrived. Resources flowed centrally to Jerusalem and Rome, without mechanisms of redistribution. This placed both the non-elite in a position of political and economic bondage. Extractive economic policies caused debt, homelessness, banditry, and an increased threat for food security.

For Luke, the political value of humility was lost in the process. Early Roman Palestine was gripped in the vice-like control of Roman and Herodian patrons, and her true friends were rejected. An erosion of the covenantal values (what “belonged to God”) ensued, and the ethical aspect of politics and economics became murky. The social cost of economic and political policies was ignored, and therefore the traditional, and covenantal concerns for justice, side lined.

In such a political and economic environment, even the strongest traditional Jewish cultural symbols lost its ability to generate social cohesion. Luke demonstrates an ambivalence towards the state of the Temple. The Temple dominated the social landscape of early Roman Palestine, but in reality, actual power was to be found in Roman patronage. The Judean elite, who were the custodians of the sacred traditions of the Temple, were in collusion with the oppressive and extractive Roman patrons. The Temple became a den of robbers. This fall from grace meant that the Temple was destined for the ash heap.

Still the Judean elite could not discern the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. They felt secure in their institutional positions, and their political connections. Political change was not possible in early Roman Palestine — society had become ἀύστηρός as a whole. The religious authority of the Judean elite has been co-opted, and lost its moral high ground.

### 9.1.2 LUKE’S VISION FOR SOCIAL COHESION IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

For Luke, a return to the covenantal ideals of Israel was necessary. Only by returning to such ideals, can the future of the renewed Israel be secure. However, there was a surprising development to this covenantal view. The covenants are recontextualised into the person of Jesus. They are no longer ancient traditions, but became living and breathing in the person and words of Jesus. The charismatic authority of Jesus breathed life into the covenants.

And here the Abrahamic covenant enjoys pre-eminence. Just as Abraham is depicted as the patriarch of Israel, so God is the Father of the faithful. And just as the

sons and daughters of Abraham become the family of Israel, so the new covenant brings people together as brothers and sisters in the household of faith. The renewal of the Abrahamic covenant reconciles and unites people and social groups as kin. The scope to this covenantal household is universal — it seeks out even the outcast, the weak and the implacable enemy. It goes beyond the boundaries that divide social groups. It actively seeks to forgive and reconcile. This point cannot be emphasised enough. It is argued in this dissertation that, just as the Temple was a unifying concept because of its sacerdotal role, the fictive covenantal kinship in the body and blood of Jesus becomes the fulfilment of the Abrahamic ideal. And this ideal is extended kinship. This Abrahamic kinship becomes the social power behind social cohesion and unity. Removing this important cog, disempowers the Lukan ethical injunctions concerning humility, service and generosity.

A kingdom is conferred on the sons and daughters of Abraham. This Kingdom empowered the household of faith by the Spirit. It is based on a charismatic religious authority, not an institutional, political authority. This Kingdom also demands high and alternate ethical standards and social patterns from those practised by the Judean elite. This Kingdom abundance encourages an ethic of positive reciprocity and self-sacrifice. A lifestyle of generosity and giving is envisioned. This distributive ethic is especially applicable when it comes to serving the weak, the vulnerable, and the social outcast. The social pattern of generosity among the sons and daughters of Abraham reflect both a religious vision of the nature of God (be merciful, as God is merciful) and a relational vision of God's benefaction (be generous, as God is generous).

This kinship is depicted in the cultural (and religious) symbol of table fellowship in general, and the Last Supper, in particular. Table fellowship embodied a renewed fictive kinship in Jesus, where a universal invitation was extended to be included into the abundance of the Kingdom. This cultural symbol is not without power. Instead of the ἀύστηρός political power of Roman patronage, the merciful patronage of God is invoked. God is the Father of his household (Lk 22:29).

The ethic of humility, and the social pattern of service, is of special political importance. Power, and authority has been conferred in order to serve. Jesus sets a social pattern of messianic servanthood, where the strongest serves the weakest. Such a political ethic envisions an equalitarian, distributive and just society. The weak and the vulnerable are precious, because God is merciful. What belonged to God, had to be rendered to God. And people belonged covenantally to God — his image is upon people. God is the owner of the vineyard (his people), and will demand just and equitable stewardship by political and religious leaders.

In summary, both the critique and suggestions by Luke are not programmatic in its nature. Luke's perspective cannot be distilled to a political philosophy, and a coherent system of political governance. It can be as readily applied to modern democracies as the imperial systems of the day. In this sense, Luke represents the best of the prophetic traditions. The ethical and moral injunctions, in the light of a covenantal view of God, scrutinise and judge the political system of the day. It is not enough to be ethnic descendants of Abraham. It is more important to be the ethical descendants of Abraham<sup>153</sup>.

## **9.2 COMPARISON: SOCIAL PATTERNS IN THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH**

What remains then, is the examination of the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church (Acts 1–7). The aim of this section is to compare the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church with the prophetic discourse of Luke (19–22). As the introductory quote (Lk 24:30–32) suggests, the prophetic discourse impacted people (“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”, NRSV). What connects the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church, and the Lukan prophetic discourse, is the author and narrative location. The examined discourse and the community both had Jerusalem as a narrative background, and both are probably described by the same author, Luke (§ 1.4.1). It is also appropriate that the investigation of Acts is limited to the

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<sup>153</sup> The word play between “ethnic” and “ethical” is employed here to emphasise that, in Luke's theological view, it was not enough to claim ethnic descent from Abraham as a claimer to covenantal faithfulness (it is not enough to have Judean ancestors). Ethical behaviour was a key component of covenantal faithfulness.

early Jerusalem church, and that it does not include the further expansion of the Jesus movement into the Roman empire. The focal point of the dissertation is social conflict in early Roman Palestine after all.

It is not argued here that Luke's prophetic discourse directly led to the described social patterns. Cause and effect is not argued. That is one step too far for this dissertation. Rather points of comparison, and especially illustration, are sought. In other words, the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church, and the discourse of Luke 19:11–22:38 are compared to establish whether they are complementary to each other. It is not proposed either that the same sort of textual data between Luke 19:11–22:38 and Acts 1–7 is considered in the dissertation. In the case of Luke 19:11–22:38, mostly the prophetic discourse of the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus is examined for Luke's critique of the Judean elite, Luke's theology of social cohesion, and lastly Luke's proposed positive social patterns. In Acts 1–7 the narrative of the growth of the early Jerusalem church will be briefly examined to determine how the depicted social patterns compare to the findings in Luke 19:11–22:38.

More importantly, care needs to be taken here not to conflate text and reality in Acts 1–7 either (cf. § 1.4.1.1.3). This chapter does not attempt to draw up a historical account of the early Jerusalem church from Acts, just as the preceding chapters does not attempt to draw up a historical account of social conflict in early Roman Palestine from the gospel of Luke. Rather, as discussed in § 1.4.1.5, it is posed that Luke is a consistent theologian. Luke's theological perspective of social conflict in Jerusalem is bound to influence the text both in Luke and Acts. This then gives an opportunity to compare the exegetical findings of Luke 19:11–22:38 with another layer of text (Acts 1–7) from the same author in the same narrative location. It is argued here that should the depicted social patterns of the early Jerusalem church, and the exegesis of the discourse in Luke complement each other, it strengthens the overall exegetical arguments made (or weakens it, should they not complement each other).

As such, the hierarchy of social domains will be followed as in Chapter 8. Points of correlation and illustration are sought concerning the conclusions made in Chapter 8. Brief observations will be made concerning the chosen pericopes of Acts 1–7. The

aim in this chapter is not to continue the exegetical task, but to seek correlation and illustration of the exegetical conclusions already made.

### 9.2.1 RELIGION, COVENANTAL KINSHIP, AND THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?”

(Acts 2:1–7, NRSV)

In the account of the outpouring of the Spirit during Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13) covenant, Abrahamic kinship and charismatic authority take centre stage. It should be noted that the narrative contains numerous covenantal allusions (e.g. Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit, and covenantal signs of the presence of God). The outpouring of the Spirit was a formative moment for the early Jerusalem church. Although this community existed in seed form with the disciples in the Upper Room, the community only expanded after the covenantal act of the outpouring of the Spirit occurred. Covenant was the driving force behind the social approach of the Jesus movement.<sup>154</sup> Covenant initiated, sustained and perpetuated the small Christ community.

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<sup>154</sup> The connection between covenant, the passage in Acts 2:1–7, and the outpouring comes through strongly in the details of the text. Peterson (2009:131) notes that some Jewish sources “associate Pentecost with God’s renewal of the covenant, three months after the original Passover and the exodus redemption from Egypt (cf. Ex. 19:1)”. Furthermore, the signs of the coming of the Spirit (wind and fire) echoes the giving of the Law on Sinai (Ex 19:18).

Even more so, this covenantal platform led to an inclusive Abrahamic kinship. A household serves as the narrative location of the account of Acts 2:1–13. “When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying” (Acts 1:13–14, NRSV). The practice of their devotion did not occur in the Temple (which was a more customary place for prayers and a show of devotion [cf. Lk 2:27,37,46; 18:10; 19:47]). As discussed in Chapter 8 (§ 8.5.1.1), the household was indicative as the location of kinship — and is used as a prime metaphor by Luke for life in the Kingdom. This devotion of the disciples in the household was blessed by signs of God’s presence (“wind” and “fire” in Acts 2:2).

As noted in Chapter 8 (§ 8.3.1.1), this renewed covenantal kinship was proposed as inclusive and universal. This is illustrated by the mysterious phenomenon of speaking in ἑτέραις γλώσσαις (Acts 2:4, NA<sup>27</sup>). There is an important point to be made in connection with the research question, and it can be simply made by composition of the receiving audience:

Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power”. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

(Acts 2:7–12, NRSV)

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The “wind” of Acts 2:2 echoes Ezekiel 37:14: “I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act,” says the Lord” (NRSV). Ezekiel employs covenantal language in this passage (Alexander 1986:925).

Although the audience were “devout Jews” (Acts 2:5), they were “from every nation under heaven” — and they were astounded when they heard their native tongue being spoken by Galilean peasants (Peterson 2009:136). This phenomenon signals the universal and inclusive scope of the new covenant. It seeks to reach “every nation”. It is the Lukan understanding that this new covenantal reality will come upon “all flesh” irrespective of age, gender, or class (Acts 2:17). The Spirit is drawing whosoever into the household of God (Lk 14:23).

The last illustrative point made from the larger passage (Acts 2:1–42) is the charismatic nature of the authority of the Jesus movement. The Jesus movement is empowered by the outpouring of the Spirit.

In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

(Acts 2:17–18, NRSV)

The Spirit is now poured out on all flesh, from the disciples of Jesus, to the pilgrims from diverse regions in the Roman empire. The prophecy of Joel 2:28–32 is recited (Bruce 1998:61). The outpouring is indiscriminate of gender, age, and social class. The net result is that “they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:18). The covenantal ideals of the Jesus movement are seen as familial, inclusive and empowering. There is no more need of an institutional priestly elite if the Spirit has empowered all. “For Luke the sign of the age to come is the presence of the Spirit” (Bruce 1988:61).

### 9.2.2 ECONOMICS AND POSITIVE RECIPROCITY IN THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was

upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

(Acts 4:32–35, NRSV)

Perhaps nowhere else in Luke, the radical values of positive reciprocity are so clearly embodied as a social pattern by a Jesus community. The fictive kinship of the community was of such quality that they were καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία (NA<sup>27</sup>). The social cohesion of this familial unity was of such nature that private ownership was not even claimed. This resulted in a radical positive reciprocity whereby there was “not a needy person among them”. And as they were generous, so there was “great grace” upon them. As Bruce (1988:74) notes: “This pooling of property could be maintained voluntarily only when their sense of spiritual unity was exceptionally active”. For Wright (1996:295) the description of Acts 4:34, closely matches Deuteronomy 15:4.<sup>155</sup> In the ideal of Deuteronomy, the sabbatical year reflects on the abundance of God’ provision. There is no urgent need in the light of God’s provision, therefore it is safe to pursue a sabbatical year.

This social pattern could not be more stark in comparison with the Lukan depiction of the Judean religious leaders and the elite. The religious leaders were lovers of money (Lk 14:16) who saw themselves as better than others (Lk 18:11). The Judean elite lived in apathy to the poor (Lk 16:19–30). They enjoyed the trappings of wealth while the poor languished in hunger (Lk 16:19–21). The early Jerusalem church broke through such hierarchy and centralisation of resources. Resources were distributed instead of hoarded. Generosity was at the order of the day. The early Jerusalem church did not give shape to a new religious elite, rather a distributive ethic moved resources to “each as any had need” (Acts 4:35 NRSV). This distributive ethic was driven by the renewed covenantal reality of “the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33 NRSV).

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<sup>155</sup> “There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the LORD is sure to bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession to occupy” (Deut 15:4, NRSV).

To be fair, the ideal of sharing was not unique to the Jesus movement in early Roman Palestine, or the broader Hellenistic culture. Witherington (1998:205) notes that the Essenes also apparently shared resources in communal setting, and that the Greek notion of true friendship also involved the act of sharing resources. However, what makes the early Jerusalem church different, was that reciprocity was positive (and distributive), not balanced (and mutual). In other words: resources were given with no expectation that it ought to be reciprocated by the recipients. As discussed in Chapter 4 (§ 4.1.3), reciprocity in the form of patronage was certainly part of the social norms of the day. In other words, the giving of resources usually followed a reciprocal relationship — which was mostly formulated as a patronage relationship. But the social patterns followed in Acts 4:32–37 were notably different. They had all things “in common”.

One of the imminent social issues that the early Jerusalem church faced, was exactly the negative social connotations with patronage as it was practised by the Judean elite in early Roman Palestine. Both positive and negative examples are provided of reciprocity practised by the members of the early Jerusalem church. Immediately after noting that resources were distributed according to need, Luke proceeds to the example of Barnabas. Barnabas practised positive reciprocity by giving generously of his own resources — with no apparent expectation of a return: “He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:37, NRSV).

The act of laying money at the apostles’ feet may denote a radical break with the norms of reciprocity. Instead of invoking the norms of reciprocity by giving the gift in a person’s own capacity, the gift was given through someone else (the Twelve). It was a way of walking away from the gift (Kueckler 2009:90). This makes the generous spirit of the early Jerusalem church all the more remarkable. It was voluntary, it broke with all the expected social norms of reciprocity, and it was of such quantity that no one lacked. That there was not lack is especially significant when it is taken in account that a large portion of the population was non-elite (§ 4.1.2). Ostensibly, a high amount of resources had to be distributed to meet the required need.

As a negative example, the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11) serve as a warning. Like Barnabas, they sold their private property, and “laid it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 5:2, NRSV). However, unlike Barnabas, they kept back a portion and pretended to give all of the proceeds. Luke notes that they were under no compulsion to give all of the proceeds (Acts 5:4). Here their reciprocity is revealed to be a balanced reciprocity, and not a positive reciprocity. They gave a part of their proceeds, and pretended it to be more than what it really was, in order to gain prestige among the community (Schnabel 2012: Acts 5:1 [Logos edition]). This may have been an effort to gain recognition as benefactors of the community (Wheatley 2011:21–22). The source of the danger to this calculated move by the couple, is the holiness of God among the community (Peterson 2009:208). “How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!” (Acts 5:4, NRSV).<sup>156</sup>

Their resultant death was a reminder that the God of covenant demands a different approach to reciprocity after “the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33 NRSV). The honour and loyalty cycle has been broken. When a person gave, he or she should freely do so without binding the recipient to power relationships inherent to patronage. God was the great patron of all, and the person who gave, should give out of loyalty to God. Not in order to gain prestige. Here then, power relationships were undercut among the early Jerusalem church — after all the passage notes that the couple did not lie to the community, but to God (Acts 5:4). God was firmly ensconced as the patron of the fledging community, and it is made clear by Luke that human power relationships did not devolve this community to a den of robbers again.

Perhaps the point of Acts 4:32–5:11 is to note that the Jesus community in Jerusalem was to be a different sort of community. It had to provide a contrast to the centralising and extractive approach to resources that was a blight to early Roman

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<sup>156</sup> The Jesus movement was not the only social group struggling with the social effects of patronage. Longnecker (1981:314) connects Acts 5:1–11 with the Essenic Community Rule: “if there be found in the community a man who consciously lies in the matter of his wealth, he is to be regarded as outside the state of purity entailed by membership, and he is to be penalized one fourth of his food ration” (1QS 6:24–25).

Palestine. It set an example to society at large what social patterns were to be emulated, and what sort of life was possible under the Abrahamic kinship. Central to this distributive ethic was an awareness of the covenantal presence and work of God in the community.

### 9.2.3 CULTURE AND TABLE FELLOWSHIP IN THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

(Acts 2:42–47, NRSV)

Acts 2:43–47 repeats the imperative of positive reciprocity — the believers had all things in common, they sold their possessions, and they distributed resources according to need. In this passage, the connection between their positive reciprocity and the practice of cultural symbols is also made clear. Two points concerning cultural symbols stand out in this regard: in the first place both the Temple and the household are mentioned in this passage; and the distribution of resources is also linked with how “they broke bread” (alluding to table fellowship).<sup>157</sup> The breaking of bread probably refers to meals eaten together, as well as to an early form of the Lord's Supper (Bruce 1988:73). These positive social patterns generated the “goodwill of all the people”; as well as numerical growth for the community.

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<sup>157</sup> Witherington (1998:160) notes that the breaking of bread possibly referred to ordinary meals, and that such an act usually opened a Jewish meal, but the phrase itself was not a technical term for meal in Judaism. This strengthens the link then to the breaking of bread of the Last Supper (Lk 22:19), since the phrase does not simply denote an ordinary meal.

This passage alludes to cultural practices (Temple and table fellowship) as an expression of the values of the community. The Jesus community had not yet made a permanent break with the Temple — nor would such a drastic step be expected at this stage of the development of the community.<sup>158</sup> Rather there seemed to be an overlapping between the importance of the Temple and the household. The Lukan depiction of the early Jerusalem church is not one of antagonism towards the traditions of early Judaism; rather of a hope to renew and subvert these traditions towards inclusive Abrahamic kinship. This kinship is symbolised by the Kingdom banquet. Nevertheless, the cultural importance of table fellowship among the Jesus movement is emphasised. This table fellowship came from a deep conviction of reciprocity. They προσκατεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ (Acts 2:42, NA<sup>27</sup>).<sup>159</sup> “In expression of their Spirit-inspired togetherness, the believers pooled their resources” (Larkin 1995: Acts 2:44 [Logos edition]).

This practice of table fellowship — and what is symbolised reinforced gladness, generosity and praising God, and generated goodwill among even those that did not belong to the community (Acts 2:47).

#### 9.2.4 POLITICS AND MESSIANIC SERVANTHOOD IN THE EARLY JERUSALEM CHURCH

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, “It is not right that

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<sup>158</sup> Elliott (1991:93–94) argues that a gradual transition of importance occurred from the centrality of the Temple to the importance of the household. This transition can be noted in the narrative development in Acts. Initially the Temple is the scene of worship and joy, but gradually becomes the place of rejection and persecution.

<sup>159</sup> Witherington (1998:160) notes that the term κοινωνία only occurs here in Luke-Acts, although the idea is commonly used. “The term itself means a participation or sharing in common of something with someone else, in this case eating and praying”.

we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word". What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

(Acts 6:1–7, NRSV)

The commissioning of the deacons connects the Last Supper with the concept of service (§ 8.6.2.1). The sacred calling to *διακονέω* is instituted as a social pattern in Acts 6:1–7. The twelve decides that "it is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables (*διακονεῖν*, NA<sup>27</sup>)". However, this does imply that serving was not to be taken as menial. It was not outsourced. The twelve committed themselves also to "devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word" (*διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν*, NA<sup>27</sup>). They continued with service. Furthermore, the chosen deacons (servants) were perceived to be "of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (Acts 6:3). They were not menial members of the community. As the narrative proceeds in Acts, they are depicted as mighty in deeds (e.g. Stephen in Acts 6:8–7; Phillip in Acts 8:4–8).

More insightful, is the reason that the text provides for the commissioning of the deacons. The Hellenist believers complained against the "Hebrews", since their "widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food" (Acts 6:1, NRSV). This incident indicates two potential degrees of separation in the early Jerusalem church. There was a rich/poor divide (widows and benefactors), and there was a cultural

divide (Hellenist and Hebrew).<sup>160</sup> The response of the Twelve is also important. In contrast to the larger society in early Roman Palestine, the Twelve did not tolerate the potential division, and conflict, between these social factions in the community. Rather, they followed the pattern of messianic servanthood (§ 8.6) as Jesus commanded in the Last Supper. This servanthood was messianic in nature, since it was embodied by the example of Jesus (Lk 22:27). It is best described by the injunction of Luke 22:26: “But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves” (NRSV). In this sense, serving is elevated from menial tasks, to a sacred calling of emulating Jesus. The powerful followed the example of Jesus in serving the weak, and the weak was dignified in receiving service.

In Acts 6:1–7 the ideal of messianic servanthood is promoted as the Twelve (and the community) chose whom they perceived to be worthy to serve. For example, it is noted that Stephan was “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5). They commissioned the deacons by praying for them and the laying on of hands. This active step of messianic servanthood gained widespread approval. It pleased the “whole community” (Acts 6:5). It subverted the hierarchical and stratified social notions of early Roman Palestine, and gained a following for the community. After overcoming this potential schism and conflict in the early Jerusalem church, Luke notes that, “the word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7, NRSV).

### 9.3 CONCLUSION

It is argued in this dissertation that Luke had a particular theological perspective on the social conflict that ripped early Roman Palestine apart.<sup>161</sup> This perspective existed of a critique of the Judean elite, but also of theological convictions of

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<sup>160</sup> There seem to be some agreement that the difference between the Hellenist and Hebrews were more linguistic (and hence cultural). The Hellenists here referred to Greek speaking Jews from diaspora communities (Bruce 1988:120; Peterson 2009:231).

<sup>161</sup> Refer to Addendum D for a table summarising Luke’s critique of the Judean elite, as well as theological perspective on social conflict.

alternate ideologies and social patterns that could bring about social cohesion. In this chapter, correlations between the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church, and the alternate ideologies of Luke, are examined. A high degree of correlation can be argued for. In other words, the social patterns of the early Jerusalem church serve as illustrations of the Lukan prophetic discourse. This strengthens the arguments made, especially those of Chapter 8.

Luke's perspective on social conflict was predominantly a religious one. In other words, for Luke the solution to social conflict was firstly theological, which is then supported by positive social patterns. This might be surprising to the modern reader, who has been steeped in political and social programmes that seek to alleviate conflict. However, the issue that this approach highlights, is what would be considered powerful enough to bridge the ideological and class divides between the conflicting social groups? A programme of reconciliation, without a strong philosophical basis of social cohesion, may not be effective. A programme flows from an alternate vision of society. A vision of society does not flow from a programme. It is argued that a philosophical basis can be extrapolated from Luke-Acts. And this philosophical basis was theological in nature. It contained a particular vision of God, and based social cohesion on that vision of God.

For Luke, this theological vision was covenantal. God is the covenantal God of Israel, and the whole world. Covenantal renewal was necessary — or even better — a return to the founding traditions of the Abrahamic was necessary. Israel had to become covenantal kin again. For Luke, Jesus is on a mission from his Father, to gain brothers and sisters in the faith, and to establish the universal household of God. In other words, there was a theological revelation of the inclusive mercy of God, which led to a particular social view. Fictive, Abrahamic, covenantal kinship is a concise description of this particular social vision. For Luke, this covenantal ideology was powerful enough to build social cohesion. It forced social groups to reconsider one another in the light of Abrahamic kinship. It propagated forgiveness. They could not continue with their power struggle in the light of a renewed kinship. The self-sacrificial ethic of Jesus sets an example to his followers. To empower this covenantal renewal, the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. The Jesus movement laid claim to charismatic authority. This pouring out of the Spirit was typified the

phenomena of Pentecost. The Spirit unified all kind of different social and cultural groups in the early Jerusalem church.

This renewed Abrahamic kinship enforced a different take on reciprocity. The endless drive for honour and more resources was not to be found in the early Jerusalem church. Not even the expected social norm of balanced reciprocity found a foothold in the community. Rather, positive reciprocity (in the form of generosity) was extensively practised. They had all things in common. No one was left in need. Economic inequality was addressed. Those with means, gladly gave of their resources, with no compulsion or social reward. The needy received without being forced into loyalty relationships that plagued early Roman Palestine.

Table fellowship indicated the radical inclusive nature of the renewed Abrahamic kinship. This cultural practise symbolised the household of faith and sharing within the household of faith. It also indicated the inclusive nature of the household. The early Jerusalem church broke bread together as they worshipped and praised God. Table fellowship modelled the alternative social view where the outcast can now share in kinship. Enemies can become brothers and sisters (e.g. priests and Pharisees became part of the community). Radical forgiveness, and radical giving is part of the household of faith.

Messianic servanthood undercut the hierarchical and static power relationships. Leaders were servants, just as Jesus served. Division, and potential incidents of conflict were solved through servanthood. Humility (as a value) was embodied by the willingness to serve in the community, the generosity in giving, and the apparent lack of wanting recognition. Roman and Herodian patronage was undercut and replaced by messianic servanthood.

A theological basis thus underlines the Lukan prophetic take on social conflict. This was followed by social patterns to be enacted by the Jerusalem community established by the Jesus movement. This was a contrast community — where the social patterns embodied a particular theological vision of society. These ideologies and social patterns were subversive because they challenged the standard social hierarchy and patterns. A revelation of God (as the merciful Father) led to a

particular social take — Abrahamic kinship. Social patterns were derived from this, and included: positive reciprocity, table fellowship, and messianic servanthood.

#### **9.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE DISSERTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The dissertation aims to formulate a theological perspective on social conflict. Social conflict is not isolated to one culture, or time period, but remains as one of the great scourges of humanity. It has a universal reach. An argument can be offered that theology should exactly aim to contribute to the great questions that humanity struggles with. And social conflict is one of those burning questions.

Furthermore, the stifling boundaries of secularism should be questioned. Human existence cannot be neatly subdivided into the boxes of the sacred and the secular. Rather, public and political theology should pose hard questions to political and religious systems. The prophetic spirit of the Jesus movement should live on. This is especially true of countries with a Judeo-Christian foundation. Here the cohesive and reconciling power of Abrahamic kinship should not be underestimated.

Lastly, churches should examine themselves as to whether they are contributing to social cohesion and national discourse. This is potentially the biggest contribution of the dissertation. It highlights social ideologies and patterns that have immense social power and potential. But these ideologies and social patterns have become hidden under layers of Christian history, and concurrent cultural movements. Abrahamic kinship, generosity, table fellowship and messianic servanthood still has the same social and subversive power, and ability to create thriving communities.

Practical points of importance, and broad recommendations are offered here. It is hoped that the novel social line of questioning and methodology in this dissertation, will inspire others to follow suit in other areas of New Testament studies. After all, other texts can equally (and fruitfully) be examined for theological perspectives on social conflict. All that is offered here, is a hypothetical take on Luke's perspective on social conflict in early Roman Palestine.

## 9.5 FINAL REMARKS ON THE MODEL OF SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC MODEL OF THE INFLUENCE OF ROMAN IMPERIALISM ON SOCIAL CONFLICT IN EARLY ROMAN PALESTINE

This dissertation employs the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) as a heuristic instrument to highlight the phenomenon of social conflict in the Lukan text, and to provide a way of identifying ideological contrasts between the Judean elite and non-elite in the text.

Care was taken to indicate the potential weaknesses of the model (§ 3.4) and to compensate for those weaknesses in the dissertation. Weaknesses listed include the absence of kinship as a social domain in the model, the embedded nature of social domains in Roman Palestine, and the nature of models as simplified representations of reality. As such the model was restricted as a heuristic tool in the dissertation, whereas socio-rhetorical criticism was used to exegete the applicable pericopes. Lastly, another layer of textual data was approached (Acts 1–7) to compare the exegetical findings with. This was done to strengthen (or weaken) the exegetical findings made.

The question is, after the completion of the dissertation, how did the socio-scientific model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine (Jacobs 2013) hold up against scrutiny of the text? In how other words how good was the fit of the model to the textual data?

On the negative side, the absence of kinship as a social domain in the model stood out. As argued, kinship was avoided as a social domain in the model because actual kinship would not have provided contrasting ideologies between the elite and non-elite (which is the main *modus operandi* of the model). As for fictive kinship, the remark was made that kinship was probably added to political concepts (such as patronage) or religious concepts (such as covenant) to ascendancy to that concept.

The emphasis was still on patronage and covenant though, not kinship as such. It was fictive kinship, not actual kinship.<sup>162</sup>

However, both the importance of Abrahamic kinship for social cohesion in Luke's theology, as well as the iron grip of Roman patronage on the social conditions in early Roman Palestine, stand out amongst the exegetical findings. This implies that kinship is too an important cog to leave out of the model. This does not change the issue that fictive kinship lend weight to another social domain (such as religion and politics), or that actual kinship would not have ideologically differed between the elite and non-elite. Also, the model was applied to a limited selection of text in Luke, not to the whole synoptic Gospels (or other texts that address the social environment of early Roman Palestine).

As such, no drastic adjustments are wise. But it is suggested that the model will be improved by adding text beneath the description "elite vision of society" and "non-elite vision of society". It is suggested that "patronal kinship" is added beneath the "elite vision of society" as the main description of the type of society envisioned by the Judean elite. It is also suggested that "covenantal kinship" is added beneath the "non-elite vision of society" as the main description of the type of society envisioned by this social group. See Addendum E for the adjusted model. In doing so, the importance of fictive kinship is illustrated in the model without changing the layout and logic of the model itself.

Patronal kinship describes how patronage tied together power networks in early Roman Palestine. It is embodied by the ἀστυριός Throne Claimant of Luke 19:11–27, and decried by Luke in the discourse of the Last Supper: "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, and the leader like one who serves" (Lk 22:25–26, NRSV).

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<sup>162</sup> As noted in footnote 23, "fictive" should not be confused with "fictional" here.

On the other hand, covenantal kinship indicates the importance of covenant as a basis for justice and society among the non-elite. Luke sets the table in this regard with the dictum of John the Baptist that the crowds should “bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham” (Lk 3:8, NRSV). The importance of covenantal kinship finds even a place in the Last Supper where the cup “poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” (Lk 22:20, NRSV).

Beyond the observations already made concerning kinship, the model proved to be an excellent heuristic instrument to indicate the phenomena of social conflict in the text. The model was tasked with highlighting pericopes that are complementary to the topic of social conflict, and to provide a way of categorising the various ideologies between the elite and non-elite in the pericopes. Subsequent socio-rhetorical exegesis of the resulting pericopes led to meaningful results in the dissertation. This suggests that the model has a good fit to the text. It also suggests that the layout and the content of the model serves well as a heuristic instrument. It is argued that the model can be fruitfully considered as a heuristic tool elsewhere in the synoptic Gospels or texts that has early Roman Palestine as a narrative location. It should be noted that the model itself is formulated specifically with the social conditions of early Roman Palestine in mind, and that therefore it is unwise to apply the model to texts with a narrative location outside of early Roman Palestine.

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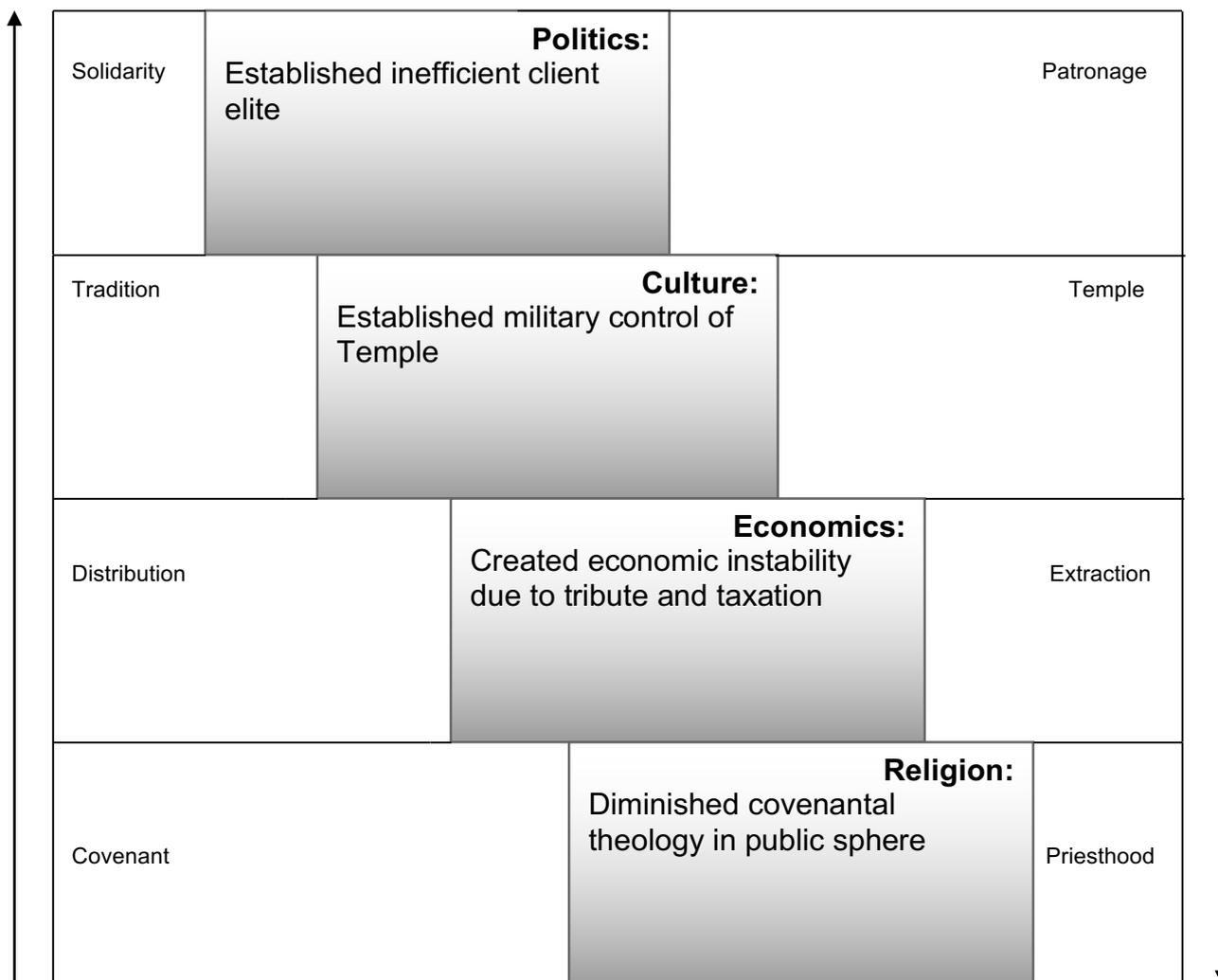
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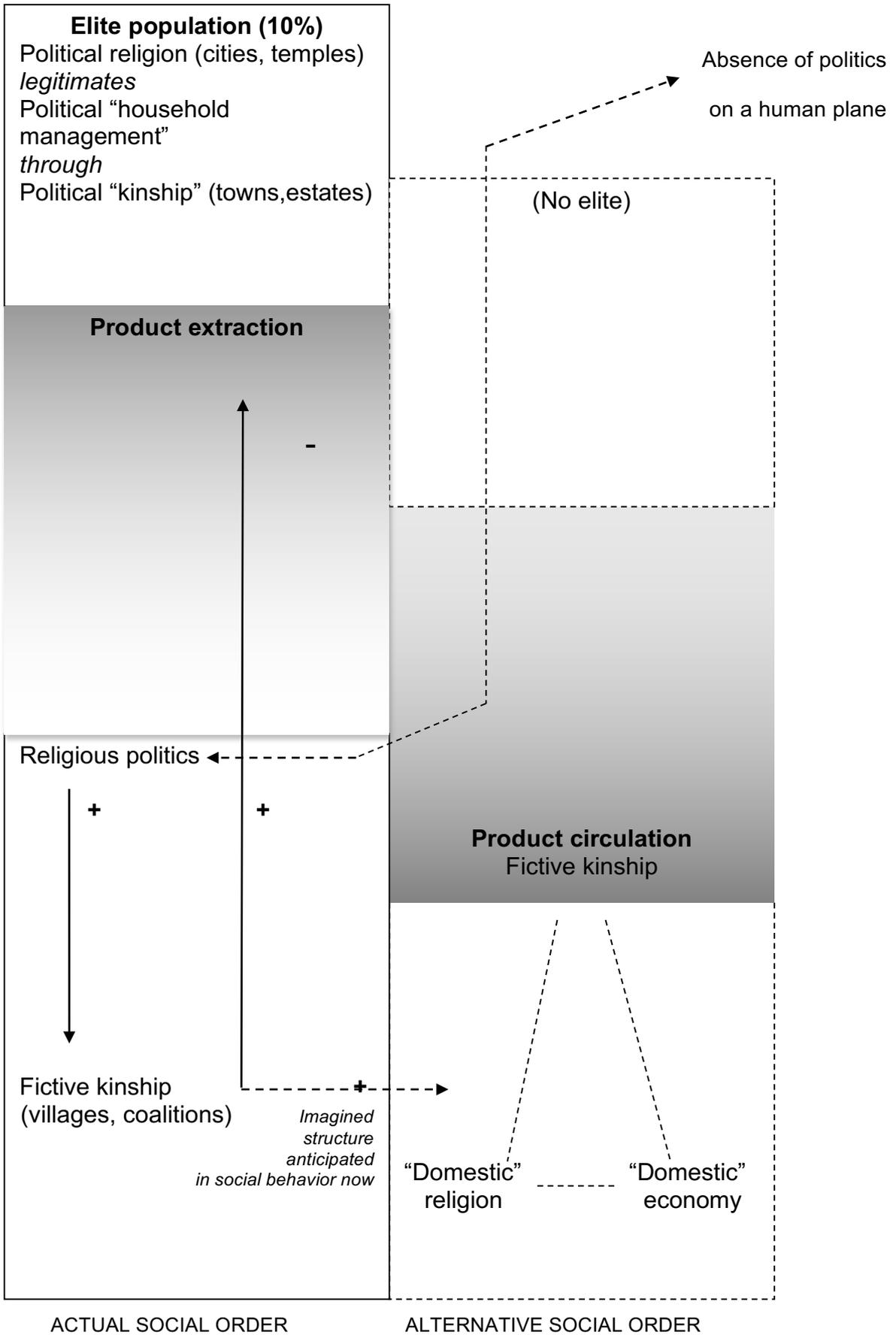
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**ADDENDUM A**

Model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine.

***ELITE VISION OF SOCIETY:*****Key concepts*****NON-ELITE VISION OF SOCIETY:*****Key concepts**

ADDENDUM B



## ADDENDUM C

Parallels between the birth narratives of Isaac in Genesis and John and Jesus in Luke. (Green 1994:68–69):

Genesis	Luke
"Now Sarai was barren; she had no child" (11:30).	"But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren" (1:7).
The Lord to Abram: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will . . . make your name great" (12:2).	An angel of the Lord to Zechariah, concerning John: "he will be great in the sight of the Lord" (1:15); Gabriel to Mary, concerning Jesus: "He will be great" (1:32).
The Lord to Abram: "I will bless you" (12:2); Melchizedek to Abram: "He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram' (14:19).	Elizabeth, full of the Holy Spirit, to Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. . . . And blessed is she who believed" (1:41, 45). Simeon, on whom the Spirit rested, with respect to Jesus' parents: "Then Simeon blessed them" (2:25, 34).
Promises to Abraham: 12:3; 15:5, 13–14, 18–21; 17:2, 4–8.	Promises to Abraham remembered by God (1:55, 73).
The Lord to Abram: "To your offspring I will give this land"(12:7); "all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever" (13:14–17; cf. 17:7; 18:18; 22:17).	Mary, concerning God, who has helped Israel "according to the promise he made . . . to Abraham and to his <i>offspring</i> forever" (1:55); Zechariah, concerning God, who has remembered "the oath that he swore to our ancestor, Abraham, to <i>give us</i> " (1:73).
Chronological and geopolitical markers (14:1).	Chronological and geopolitical markers (1:5).

Genesis	Luke
Melchizedek to Abram: "blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand" (14:20; cf. 15:13–14; 22:17).	Gabriel to Mary: "[Jesus] will be called the Son of the Most High . . . and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (1:32, 35); Zechariah to John: "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High" (1:76); Zechariah: God has granted "that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve . . ." (1:74).
The Lord to Abram: "Do not be afraid, Abram," followed by words of God's gracious act on his behalf (15:1).	The angel of the Lord to Zechariah: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah," followed by words of God's gracious act on his behalf (1:13); Gabriel to Mary: "Do not be afraid, Mary," followed by words of God's gracious act on her behalf (1:30).
"And [Abram] believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness" (15:6; cf. 18:19; 26:5).	"Both of them [Zechariah and Elizabeth] were righteous before God" (1:6).
"Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children" (16:1).	"But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren" (1:7).
The angel of the Lord to Hagar: "Now you have conceived <i>in your womb</i> and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael. . . He shall be a wild ass of a man" (16:11–12).	The angel to Mary: "And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great" (1:31–32).
"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram" (17:1).	"[Elizabeth and Zechariah] were getting on in years...Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord" (1:7, 11).

Genesis	Luke
God to Abram: "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless" (17:1).	"Both of them [Zechariah and Elizabeth] were righteous before God, <i>walking</i> blamelessly" (1:6).
God promises to Abraham: "an everlasting covenant," "ancestor of a multitude of nations," "kings shall come from you" (17:4–8; cf. 17:16).	Zechariah, of God: "He has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham" (1:72–73); cf. "throne," "kingdom" (1:32–33); "our ancestor," "Abraham," "forever" (1:55).
"Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old" (17:12); "And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old" (21:4).	Of John: "On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child" (1:59); of Jesus: "After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child" (2:21).
God to Abraham: "I will give you a son by [Sarah]" (17:16); "your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac," + future role of child (17:19).	The angel of the Lord to Zechariah: "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John," + future role of child (1:13); Gabriel to Mary: "And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus" (1:31).
"And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham" (17:22).	"Then the angel departed from [Mary]" (1:38).
Abraham presents himself as a servant (Gen 18:3–5).	Mary presents herself as a servant (1:38, 48).

Genesis	Luke
Abraham to God: "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (17:17); "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age. . . . So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?'" (18:11–12).	Zechariah and Elizabeth "were <i>advanced in age</i> " (1:7); Zechariah to God: "For I am an old man, and my wife is <i>advanced in age</i> " (1:18).
The Lord to Abraham: "Is anything <i>impossible with God</i> ?" (18:14).	Gabriel to Mary: "For nothing will be impossible with God" (1:37).
Abraham a "prophet" (20:7). "Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son" (21:2).	Zechariah "prophesied" (1:67). "Elizabeth conceived . . . and she bore a son" (1:24, 57).
"Now Sarah said, 'God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me'" (21:6).	Elizabeth observes that God has taken away her disgrace (1:25); "Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her" (1:58).
Of Isaac: "The child grew, and was weaned" (21:8); of the son of Hagar: "God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness" (21:20).	Of John: "The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness" (1:80); of Jesus: "The child grew and became strong . . . and the favor of God was upon him" (2:40; cf. 2:52).

**ADDENDUM D**

Summary of Luke's critique of the Judean elite, and Luke's theological perspective for social cohesion.

	<b>Judean elite</b>	<b>Jesus movement</b>
<b>Religion</b>	Sacerdotal	Covenantal
	Institutional	Charismatic
	Ritual purity	Abrahamic kinship
<b>Economics</b>	Negative reciprocity	Positive reciprocity
	Extraction	Generosity
	Centralising	Distributive
<b>Culture</b>	Temple	Table fellowship
	Religious legitimisation	Covenantal inclusion
	Passover	Last Supper
<b>Politics</b>	Roman patronage	Messianic servanthood
	Harshness	Humility
	Hierarchical	Equalitarian

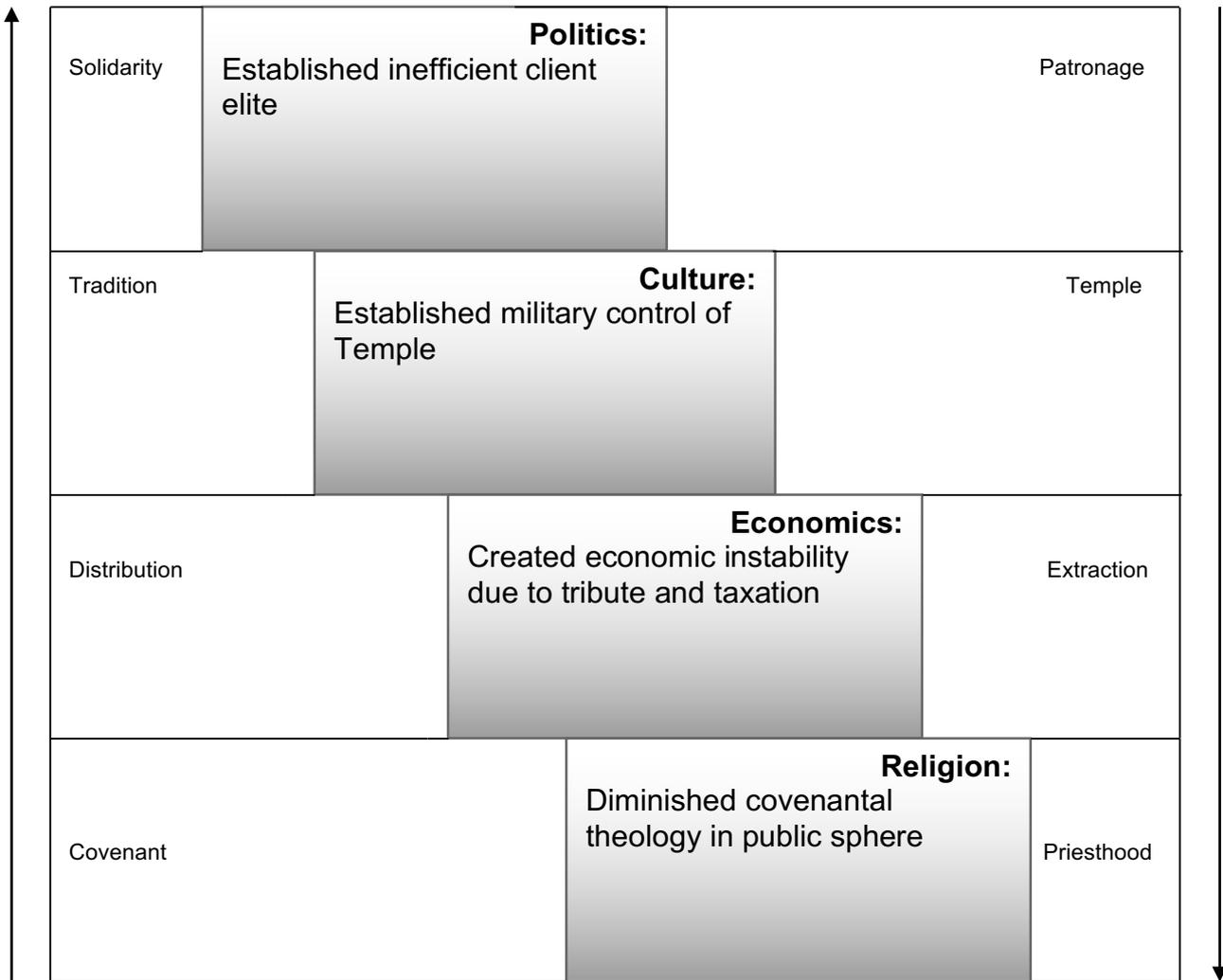
**ADDENDUM E**

Adjusted model of the influence of Roman imperialism on social conflict in early Roman Palestine.

***ELITE VISION OF SOCIETY:***

**Patronal kinship**

**Key concepts**



***NON-ELITE VISION OF SOCIETY:***

**Covenantal kinship**

**Key concepts**