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The Significance of the Meal  
in Luke's Gospel

by

Fiona L. M. Smith

A thesis submitted for the  
degree of M.A. in Theology  
at the University of Durham

1987

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For all my family and friends  
with whom I have shared  
table-fellowship

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

Most merciful Lord,  
your love compels us to come in.  
Our hands were unclean,  
our hearts were unprepared;  
we were not fit  
even to eat the crumbs from under your table.  
But you, Lord, are the God of our salvation,  
and share your bread with sinners.  
So cleanse and feed us  
with the precious body and blood of your Son,  
that he may live in us and we in him;  
and that we, with the whole company of Christ,  
may sit and eat in your kingdom. Amen.

From Alternative Service Book Rite A, 1980, p.170.

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Fiona L. M. Smith

"The Significance of the Meal in Luke's Gospel"

M.A. in Theology, Durham University 1987

The aim of this thesis is to examine the Lukan meal accounts. The number of references to the theme of meals in Luke (Lk.5: 27f; 7: 36f; 9: 10f; 10: 38f; 11: 37f; 14: 1f; 19: 1f; 22: 14f; 24: 13-43) shows that the writer attached considerable significance to it, and that it demands investigation.

Where these meals have been studied previously, a Eucharistic shadow has been cast over them. It is the intention of this work to show that the meal has its own importance. It is our contention that Luke recorded these meals for a purpose; either to show an aspect of Jesus and His ministry or to teach his readers something. They are, we contend, more than mere settings. Luke's theological purpose is related to these meals. The Lukan Jesus' use of the meal or banquet motif in many parables supports this hypothesis.

The Lukan references are studied against the background of the social and religious importance of meals in Judaism and the contemporary world (chapter 2). For in order to evaluate realistically the meal's significance and function we need to look at the relationship between the life of the community and its ideology. Our texts, that is, are not only the products of a theological ideal, but also the product of a social context.

Next, the Lukan meal accounts have been classified into particular categories, according to who Jesus' table companions were (chapter 3: Tax Collectors and Sinners; Chapter 4: Pharisees; chapter 5: Disciples and Followers). Any possible links between Jesus's actions in table-fellowship and His spoken parables, are studied in chapter 6. Then the meal references in Acts are discussed in chapter 7.

In the final chapter (8), conclusions from the previous chapters are brought together, under the heading, "Lukan Meals: A Social and Religious Challenge". Jesus' motives and behaviour are reviewed alongside the reactions of his table companions and those present. The important question of how Jesus' actions, motives and table companions relate to Luke's theology and the social considerations of his day receives special scrutiny.



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Chapter 1: Introduction.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the Lukan meal accounts. The number of references to the theme of meals in Luke (Lk.5: 29f; 7: 36f; 9: 10f; 10: 39f; 11: 37f; 14: 1f; 19: f; 22: 14f; 24: 30f) (1) show that the writer attached considerable significance to it, and that it demands investigation.(2)

There is a clear need for a detailed investigation of the important Lukan motifs of hospitality and the meal setting. Where these motifs have been studied previously "a Eucharistic shadow" has been cast over them.(3) It is the intention of this work to show that the meal has its own importance. The meal will be scrutinized alongside the Eucharistic event, but not in the light of it.

The Last Supper will be studied as one of the series of Lukan meals, although lack of space necessitates that much of the scholarly investigation of it cannot be considered. A concentrated examination of the meal in Luke is itself a desideratum.

An additional scholarly deficiency is to be found in the area of a sociological and anthropological study of our subject. My aim is to examine the passages exegetically, while taking into account sociological and anthropological perspectives. These disciplines are playing an increasingly important role in New Testament studies, although many scholars still treat them with a degree of mistrust and misunderstanding. Many theologians have remained content with more traditional methods of interpretation, being happy to discover academic issues behind the text; "reflecting, one suspects, more the interests of the theologians themselves than the real interests of the first century writer"(4)

However, sociology and anthropology have much to offer to New Testament Studies. The aim of sociology is to describe



typical social attitudes, behaviour and customs and to analyse the organisation and growth of human societies. The role of anthropology is to look at cultural patterns which shape man's behaviour, emotions and expectations.

Obviously these areas overlap and interact. In order to evaluate realistically the significance and function of the meal we need to look at the relationship between the life of the community and its ideology.(5) Our subject will also involve us in discussion about the social and religious function of the meal and the interrelation or socio-religious dynamics of groups in society. Jesus ate with a wide social spectrum of people and this had socio-religious repercussions. His table companions included tax-collectors, sinners, fishermen, a zealot, Pharisees and women.

Our texts are not only the products of a theological ideal, but also the product of a social context. Different cultures and societies assign different meanings and values to certain actions and behaviour. When studying our texts we need to look for the cultural story of the people who produced the texts and be careful not to make assumptions with our own culture in mind. We shall attempt then to keep the complexity of social relationships and turmoil of social situations at the front of our minds in order to gain a more realistic understanding of the social behaviour we are considering. We believe then that the contribution that these methods can make to our understanding is quite significant.

A sociological or anthropological interpretation of a passage obviously faces certain difficulties. An initial difficulty is lack of evidence or material. The New Testament and other contemporary documents were not written as sociological analyses or anthropological descriptions. As this is so, the

questions we ask may not be able to be answered due to a lack of appropriate data.(6)

The sociologist or anthropologist of present-day societies or cultures can test his theories through surveys, interviews or observation. Obviously the meals of Jesus cannot be tested in this way. The temptation is then to resort to what Howard Kee(7) calls "the danger of parallelomania"; this occurs when an institution in a different culture resembles the one being studied. Functions and context may be very different, but sweeping generalisations or comparisons are tempting; hence only cautious conclusions can be drawn.

We must pay careful attention to the cultural system we are dealing with. Anthropology requires us to "take on the role of another empathetically, to move into someone else's shoes, to perceive from someone else's horizon or standpoint".(8) This is a difficult task. It is particularly difficult to construct paradigms that promote an understanding of a social system, its values and its patterns of culture.(9) The complex nature of the New Testament must be born in mind.

Sociology and anthropology both involve interpretations and presuppositions. This makes it impossible to refer to the sociological approach or the anthropological approach. This is not to invalidate such methods. It is simply to recognise that the understanding of people and society is not straightforward. Such methods are indeed valuable in their richness and diversity of suggestions. Indeed, any method or interpretation of the New Testament is not straightforward. All require a certain amount of reconstruction. The disciplines of theology, sociology and anthropology need to be open to each other's findings in a discerning way. It is hoped that the limits of

any stance will be minimised when applied in union with other perspectives.

Theissen's(10) approach is valuable in insisting that a distinction be made between the analysis of roles, factors and function. An analysis of roles investigates typical patterns of behaviour; an analysis of factors, the way in which this behaviour is determined by society; and an analysis of function, its effects on society. No attempt is made to find a social "first cause", as economic, ecological, political and cultural factors cannot be separated in their reciprocal interaction. Religion also contributes in a variety of ways to the basic aims of society; it may promote integration or overcome conflict through change.

Alongside Theissen's and other theologians' use of sociological methods, we will be using the distinctive anthropological perspective of Malina.

We have thus sought to justify our overall method of approach. The Lukan references will be studied against the background of the contemporary world. (Chapter 2) For an understanding of what Jesus conveyed in his table fellowship cannot be divorced from the associations a meal held at that time. This second chapter is intended to form the basis of our work in the remaining sections.

The Lukan meal references have been classified into particular categories according to who Jesus' table companions were. Thus in Chapter 3 we deal with the accounts concerning tax-collectors and sinners.(S: 29f; 19: 1f) It was these companions who made the biggest impression on Jesus' critics, and we discuss the reasons for this, and the ultimate consequences. In Chapter 4 we examine the accounts of meals with the Pharisees (7: 36f;

11: 37f; 14: 1f) Such meals show Jesus' concern with the whole spectrum of society, making it impossible to identify Jesus simply with the marginals of his society. The peculiar problems raised by such meals will be examined. Then in Chapter 5 we take up the accounts dealing with disciples and followers (9: 16f; 10: 39f; 22: 14f; 24: 30f) and the question of whether these meals have any special significance along with links with the other Lukan meals.

Each meal in Luke was recorded for a particular reason, and the theological and sociological implications will be explored. The Lukan theme of meals and hospitality is also clearly seen in his parables. These, and any possible links between Jesus' actions in table-fellowship and His spoken parables, are studied in Chapter 6.

As Luke wrote a sequel to his Gospel in Acts, any study of this theme would be incomplete without a mention of this book as well. In Chapter 7, the interesting question will be raised of Luke's purpose in writing a second volume and whether Acts contains or continues the meal trait.

In the final chapter (8), conclusions from the previous chapters will be brought together, under the heading "Lukan meals: A Social and Religious Challenge". Any themes that are distinctive to the various accounts of the meals, or show similarities between them, will be discussed. The relationship between the meals and those present at them will be explored. Jesus' motives and behaviour will be reviewed alongside the reactions of his table companions, and those present. The important question of how Jesus' actions, motives and table companions relate to Luke's theology and the social considerations of his day receive special scrutiny.

(1) In addition there are several Lukan parables on a related theme: eg. Luke 14: 15-24; 15: 11-32.

(2) It was originally intended that this thesis should be directed towards a study of the Eucharistic texts, but this line of investigation was altered when the neglected 'meal' aspect became apparent.

(3) For example: "There can, indeed, be no doubt that Christ thought long in advance of the sacrament of bread and wine which he wished to leave to his disciples and that the multiplication of loaves and other meals were for him a kind of preparation for, or sketch of the Eucharist". P. Rouillard, "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist" part 2, Worship, Part 53, 1979, p.40.

(4) Derek Tidball, An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament, p.11.

(5) The Church was not just a theological idea, but also a social institution which grew and existed in a concrete world.

(6) See G. Theissen, First Followers of Jesus, pp.2-3. All information has to be extracted laboriously by a process of inference. Three different procedures can be distinguished: a) constructive conclusions; b) analytical conclusions; c) comparative conclusions.

(7) Howard Kee, Community of the New Age, S.C.M. 1977. However, Kee is making a specific application of a more general phenomenon identified by Sandmel. See S. Sandmel, A Jewish Understanding of The New Testament.

(8) B. Malina, The New Testament World, p.18.

(9) Many models or paradigms have been devised primarily in relation to modern society. Another difficulty is that a paradigm is necessarily static and therefore anything that does not conform is regarded as deviance. Hence paradigms tend to simplify complex realities. They are not replicas or reality, but types, constructed after the discovery of similarities. As a paradigm is deliberately constructed to accentuate certain features, so that special attention is paid to the phenomenon, this gives a distorted picture. It must be remembered that constructions are always precarious, so the similarities must not be overstressed or the differences underplayed.

(10) G. Theissen, The First Followers of Jesus.

## Chapter 2: The Concept of Table Fellowship.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the historical and sociological context of the Lukan meal. The importance of what Jesus conveyed in his table-fellowship can only be fully understood against the background of the meal in the age in which He lived. To perceive the significance of his far-reaching challenge involves taking account of first century notions; only then can the meaning of this commonplace action be fully grasped.

For the readers of Luke's Gospel in the first century the meal was full of social and theological ideas. The reader in the twentieth century can easily miss or misinterpret its meaning.

It is necessary for us to differentiate between our cultural experiences and perceptions and those of the New Testament. This is not an easy task.

A major difficulty in our enquiry is the use of Rabbinic materials. Scholars have become increasingly aware of the complexity of Judaism in the first century. The materials portray a "normative Judaism" that did not exist before 70 A.D. and they represent the viewpoint of one victorious tradition. It is now realised that orthodoxy came later. The second problem concerning the use of Rabbinic materials is that all the sources are themselves relatively late in written form. The earliest is the Mishnah, at the end of the second century A.D. and some are much later still. Even though they purport to represent earlier traditions, sometimes first century A.D. or even earlier, clearly the final form of their tradition reflects a long process of transmission and development. This has been influenced by historical, social, political and economic developments, as well as by the geographical setting and condition. Hence to reconstruct anything of validity for first century Palestine is fraught with difficulty, although it is not

entirely impossible.(1)

Indeed the New Testament and Christianity present similar problems, with orthodoxy and heresy not defined until the end of the second and beginning of the third century. We need to be careful then about making generalisations.

A further difficulty is the use of sociological and anthropological methods and models in New Testament studies.(2) This, as we stated in the introduction, is relatively new and not without its problems. For patterns of society in the first century are not explained in our text, but assimilated and assumed.(3) A society is bound together or performs according to socially shared patterns. These socially shared patterns are self-evident and are not, therefore, verbalized. It is in this area of underlying social systems that scholars of sociology and anthropology offer so much to Biblical studies. Insights from such methods enable us to take a firmer grasp of theological and hermeneutical issues.

In spite of these difficulties with the text and its interpretation we do know that the world in which Jesus ate was one in which the idea of meals, hospitality and etiquette was well-developed and important. Indeed the meal was a prominent symbol endowed with social meaning and value. The sacred meal was important in Judaism, as is shown by the Old Testament(4) and later Jewish writings.(5) Obligations regarding hospitality, guests and one's company at table are subjects frequently referred to in Jewish literature. The theme is also of significance more widely in literature from the Graeco-Roman world.(6) Jesus added new meaning to an already significant action. His presence and companions provide the meal table with a new depth of meaning.

#### Hospitality.

Hospitality was highly esteemed by Jews and others in antiquity.

It was one of the salient features of the social system. This hospitality was the process which changed the strangers' status to that of guest. This was the view of the mediterranean world more generally; hospitality was not simply entertaining friends and family.

The responsibility of hospitality is prevalent throughout the Bible. We see Abraham welcoming strangers (Gen.18: 1,2; cf.19: 1). The best possible courtesy is afforded them and they are received as honoured guests. In Exodus 2: 20 Reuel is surprised his daughters do not invite the stranger they meet for a meal. He orders them to "call him that he might eat bread".(7) The Moabites and the Ammonites are indicted for their failure to meet the Israelites' needs with bread and water.(Dt.23: 4) Manoah provides for his guest (Judg.13: 15), while in Gibeah lack of moral and spiritual consciousness by people links hands with a complete lack of hospitality.(Judg.19: 15) Isaiah (58: 7) also gives as one of the marks of true religion a willingness to care for the naked and hungry.

Thus the mutual obligations of men to help each other can be seen in the ancient world in some of the customs of hospitality. This tradition can be seen to have a basis in divine sanction.(8) This can be illustrated by the fact that many temples and altars were places of asylum. Fear of God and his guests demand that the seeker of asylum is protected. Both the Greek sagas and the Biblical material extol hospitality, for example Job (13: 32). In contrast Jael breaks this law of hospitality.(Judg.4: 17)

Ideas of hospitality at the time were linked with the important idea of sheltering and entertaining heavenly beings. Ancient Greek sagas told of men being tested when the gods arrived on earth in disguise.(Ovid.Met, 8, 613-715; Cf.Gen.19) When such ideas



encountered biblical monotheism, gods were replaced by angels (Gen. 18f).

The alien (9) was not always viewed as a guest. Foreign people were either aliens in transit or resident. The passing traveller was esteemed by the Jew as a dinner guest; on the other hand the resident alien was despised. The stranger was granted table fellowship (10) and protection. Indeed, obligation to the guest was sometimes stronger than that to relative or neighbour, even extending to the offer of life itself.

Alongside this concept was the attitude that everything foreign or unclean should be rejected. The resident alien, although brought under the same protection (Ex. 22: 20) as the widow and orphan, was despised as a table companion. Conversely, the traveller was welcomed at table (Gen. 12: 26; 29. cf. Ruth 2: 10). The law concerning foreigners continued to develop its legal, religious and sociological dimensions, until proselytes were included as full members of Judaism.

Jesus entered a society where boundaries between people were clearly demarcated. A sharp line was drawn between Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean, male and female, parent and child, as well as between resident and travelling alien. People were encultured to react in certain ways to these groups of people. These boundaries were part of the pattern of their society. The constant recognition of status and personal worth was important, as was an elaborate etiquette and formal politeness.

For the world of Judaism had clear ideas about purity, kinship, marriage, the individual and the group. Rules and ideas governing these concepts were clear, established and rooted in strong religious convictions. There was then a traditional taxonomy for religious and social life. This affected how the non-Jew or "alien" was

treated, and it was important to the idea of hospitality.

However, the attitude pertaining to the concept of "alien" underwent vast change. The two principles or methods were, a) complete exclusions, and b) complete inclusion. The attitude provoked by the Exile is interesting. Universalism, proclaimed by the prophets, called for mission among alien people. (Is. 42: 6: 66: 19: Jon; Zech 14; Tob.14: 6) But the missionary challenge of Deutero-Isaiah was not taken up, and despite the protests of the authors of Ruth and Jonah, nationalism or particularism prevailed. So the diversity of views remained. This is well illustrated by comparison of the following texts - Is.45: 14f; 56: 1-6; Ezek.47: 22; 7 Jer.46: 51; Ezek.25-32 There is an increasing polarity of attitudes in the post-exilic period.

The Samaritans are rejected in the post-exilic period and by the first century B.C. there is hardly(11) any expression of universalism. Universalism is lacking in Maccabees and Jubilees. M. Hengel (12) compares fragments by the Jewish historian Eupolemus and those of an unknown Samaritan. The most essential difference, apart from the two competing sanctuaries of Gerizim and Jerusalem, is the universalist breadth of the anonymous Samaritan and the nationalistic narrowness of Eupolemus. The Samaritan probably wrote in Palestine between the Seleucid conquest in 200 B.C. and the Maccabean revolt, while Eupolemus' history work begins after 158/57 B.C. In one the universalist tendency predominates, and in the other the nationalist. The Maccabean revolt appears to have brought about this change.

By the first century A.D. indeed, the attitude towards the Gentiles hardened in some areas. For example in 4.Ezra 5: 23f. "Thou has said that they (the Gentiles) are nothing and that they are like unto spittle and thou hast likened the abundance of them

to a drop in a bucket".

However, this statement is not the picture of the entire attitude of Judaism to the Gentiles in the first century A.D.

For although there was growth in the particularist spirit, there was also present an uneasy conscience. The author of 4 Ezra only accepts this traditional attitude under protest. The same uneasiness is found on the subject of Proselytism. With the decline in the belief of universalism, the only hope for the Gentile was to become a naturalized Jew. A large number of proselytes were gained. As R. Eleazer of Modiim wrote (A.D. 120-40) "God scattered Israel among the nations for the sole end that proselytes should wax numerous among them" (b.Pes. 87b). The proselytes were a warning to their contemporaries.

The attitude of the Rabbis varied. "Generally, however, the Rabbis seem to have oscillated between a desire to keep off proselytes with one arm and the desire to draw them with the other".(13) Undoubtedly the Gentile problem was a subject under discussion.

Many foreigners found the Jewish way of life hostile. Circumcision represented the really offensive element to non-Jews. Entry for proselytes became more difficult. Foreigners were regarded as a lower stratum of the population and unclean. Gentiles were allowed only to reach a certain point in the Temple forecourt, beyond which they were subject to the death penalty. Nevertheless, Jerusalem was a πόλις ἔπασσι τοῖς ἀλλοφύλοις ἀναπεπταμένη εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ. (Jos. Bell, 4: 275; cf. Jn. 12:20; Acts 8: 27).

To supplement the customs regarding the alien, we see from the New Testament evidence that the Pharisees were chary of social intercourse with the publican and sinner, at all times, but especially at table. We have already discussed the difficulties of using

Rabbinic evidence as valid for conditions in first century Palestine. In addition much of the Rabbinic evidence relates to an idealized picture, corresponding at most to what the Pharisaic haburoth pre-70 saw as important. However, with those limitations in mind it is useful to look at some of the Rabbinic evidence. It seems the meal was not regarded purely as an occasion for nourishment men ate at the table of God. As Rabbi Simeon (M. Aboth. 3: 3) states, "three who have eaten at one table and have said over it the words of the Torah, are as if they had eaten at the table of God (ha maqom), blessed be he, for it is said: This is the table that is before the Lord" (Ezek. 41: 22).

Conversely R. Simeon indicates (Aboth. 3: 3) "Three who have eaten at one table and have not said over it words of Torah are as if they had eaten sacrifices of the dead (idols), for it is said: All tables are full of vomit and filthiness without God (ha maqom)." (14)

It should be noted that the fear of mixed marriages was connected with joining the heathen in table-fellowship. Such meals took place, but with the obligation to the poor in mind.

In addition, accounts are found variously ascribing the Pharisees objections to the table-fellowship of Jews with men of low morals (see Mt. 18: 17). One victorious, later Rabbinic tradition makes the same point, "The pure-minded in Jerusalem would not sit down to a meal unless they knew who their table-companions were to be." (b. Sanh. 23a). For the meal was not for mere eating and drinking and was not to degenerate into that. The guests must honour the host. Likewise the host has responsibilities and he infringes the requirements of hospitality if he fails to attend to his guests properly.

So both host and guest were expected to behave in a certain way. Jesus challenged many of the attitudes and expectations.

He envisaged new and different forms of obligation. He ate with sinners as a guest; he neither accused them of being sinners nor asked them to change their behaviour. (Mt.9: 10; Lk.5: 29; 19: 8) In Luke 7: 36-50 Simon the Pharisee neglects his duties as host. There is no foot washing; no kiss; no anointing; and no keeping away the sinful woman. In Lk.7 40-41 Jesus defends his honour as a guest. The guest could also infringe the requirements of hospitality by usurping the role of the host. Jesus enters a home uninvited (Mk.1: 30); he takes precedence (Lk.14: 8); he gives orders (Lk.10: 40).

For Jesus was often seen at table and was called "a glutton and a drunkard" (Mt.11: 19) by his critics. This contrasts with the Pharisees who are often represented as not readily accepting invitations to banquets. Again later, victorious Rabbinic evidence shows this to be expected behaviour, the "student who is always found at other people's tables profanes the name of God" (Yoma 866, Aboth de R. Nathan, 1: XXVI). Many rabbis would only consume a "meal of duty" outside their own home, such as a wedding feast.

Our study has already shown us that religion in the first century was a social event in the life of an individual and it also created a pattern of social behaviour. For religion and social behaviour were inextricably bound together. So when Jesus challenged social patterns He also questioned religious expectations. This can be seen in many areas of His ministry. He shared a table with tax-collectors, sinners and prostitutes. Among His disciples there were such people; He touched lepers, respected women, disregarded Sabbath and purity Laws. He claimed to forgive sins; He cleansed the Temple and raised the dead.

In order to understand fully the repercussions of Jesus' actions our study must take account of the overt sociological structures and anthropological ideas. We need to be attuned to the thought worlds

of the Biblical writers, then, and alert to what is explicitly stated, but also to those aspects which are implicitly assumed to be understood by the reader. We can include in this common ground practices regarding hospitality for travelling disciples.(see Mk.6: 10 par; Rom.12: 13; 1 Pet.4: 9; Acts.17: 7; 21: 17; 28: 7; Rom.16: 23)

For travelling, Christians appear to have assumed that they would receive hospitality wherever they went (see also Acts 21: 4f; 7f; 15f; Philemon 22; Titus 3: 13; 1 Cor. 6: Rom.15: 23; 1 Cor.16: 11; 3 John) We can see this idea emerging from many New Testament writings, especially Luke's. For Luke frequently introduces material in this Gospel that places Jesus in a setting where hospitality is enjoyed and becomes part of his teaching, (eg. Luke.14: 7-14) Hospitality is regarded as a virtue and not as a way to overcome practical problems. Frequently it is viewed as the expression of Christian love.(Rom.13: 9-13; Heb.13: 1-2; 1 Pet. 4: 8-10) It is our contention that although the practice of Christian hospitality has received some attention, its theological repercussions still require further discussion. We hope to go some way towards correcting this omission in the following chapters.

### Etiquette.

Jesus entered a world where not only hospitality was important. All meals, hospitality and indeed social contact were governed by a strict code of etiquette. As previously mentioned, there were strict social boundaries and a constant recognition of status. This had vast repercussions in the area of table-companionship. For people were enculturated to react in certain ways. They shared the same cultural cues regarding who was a suitable table companion and who was not. However, Jesus crossed many of these traditional boundaries, setting up a new taxonomy for religious

and social life. This had enormous repercussions. For he challenged many first century sentiments, attitudes, perceptions and expectations by His actions. Neusner's maxim "symbol change is social change"(15) and Douglas' statement that "the breaking of one rule involves the attack on the whole system of rules, rituals, personal identity and community", (16) show us the importance of Jesus' actions.

Jesus' actions attacked Israel's identity, which was grounded in the Torah. When an identity is threatened the result is an intensification of norms. Already anxiety in Israel about foreign influence had intensified laws about coming into contact with anything alien, foreign or unclean. These concerns of Torah affected the Koinonia of Jesus' ecclesia.

Against this background, we can see that Luke has a social intention in his writing, a social intention which is closely associated with his theological purposes. We see Luke tackling socially-accepted behaviour and attempting to overcome a good deal of mistrust, prejudice and sceptism. He writes to justify the openness of the community towards those who would have been considered unworthy or unclean by Jewish standards.

We see then that sociological and anthropological considerations are pertinent to our discussion of Lukan meals. Ideas of community have theological repercussions and are apposite to the exegesis of a passage.

For Luke's work openly displays a social dimension. His concern for women, Gentiles, the poor and tax-collector is evident. Luke also emphasizes the inclusion of outsiders, Roman officers, Samaritans, the Ethiopian-eunuch and the demon-possessed. However, there is also room for the Pharisee, the rich, and the law-observing Jew. A feature of Luke-Acts

is a spirit of ecumenicity and the attempt to harmonize persons of differing status, their theological and social status being closely linked. This is illustrated by the settlements of disputes in Acts 6; 10; 15 and 21. Jew and Christian are also seen to be able to reach mutual understanding (Acts 5: 33-39; Acts 21).

So religion is a social event in the life of an individual, and it also creates a pattern of social behaviour and corporate responsibility. Luke portrays Jesus as breaking down the established boundaries surrounding suitable table companions, and pictures the act of a meal as a symbolic accomplishment of social integration. From many different types of people emerges a single entity.

Jesus however does not just issue a challenge in the area of table-companionship. He shocks the Pharisees by neglect of certain rites of etiquette. We first need to examine these rites.

When a guest arrived at the host's residence for a feast or banquet, he would be received with a kiss (Lk.7: 45). The guest of a Jew of some position would arrive dressed in a white gala costume (Ec.9: 8). To wear one's everyday clothes to a feast was seen as an insult to the host (Mt. 22: 11f). Then the washing of feet was performed. This was especially welcome if performed by host or hostess (Is. 25: 41; 1 Tim. 5: 10; Jn.13: 4f). The head of the guest would then be anointed with perfumed oil (Ps. 23: 5).

It is probable that the dining-room of many homes opened onto the street. Curtains may have been placed over or near the entrance so that the diners were shielded in part from the curious gaze of passers-by. However, the custom of the day allowed people to observe and gossip about those present at a



feast (Mt. 9: 11; Lk. 7: 36-50). A stranger might even enter uninvited during a meal. The host might add him to the party; if the couches were full he would be accommodated on a chair or stool (cp. Jos. Vit. 44).

However, only the well-off, who built their houses in the Roman manner, had a dining-room. The Jews liked eating in the open air; meals would often be eaten in the courtyard. In winter they would dine indoors in one large room which was also the kitchen.

Next, the water was brought to the guests for the washing of hands. This was no ordinary washing, but literally "a lifting of water upon the hands". This involved water being poured from a vessel onto the hands. Although this practice is not mentioned in the Old Testament (17) it is universally observed by the civilized nations of antiquity. It was important by the first century A.D. and was particularly practised by the Pharisees (Mk. 7: 1-4). It was claimed to be not of Mosaic origin, but rather "a tradition of the elders".(18) The hands were also washed at the end of a meal, a necessity for a people to whom cutlery was unknown.

So we have seen that there was a strict etiquette which governed all meals - washing of hands, anointing, and there were also arrangements concerned with seating and the Blessing. The Jews were punctilious over such matters. The rules of etiquette (19) at table were extremely important and were not to be broken. Some feasts indeed were obligatory under the Law and were laid down to the smallest of details. An example of this is the Passover.

The ways in which Jesus challenges these rules on etiquette is discussed further in the chapter concerning Pharisees.

For it is in the company of the Pharisees that Jesus' challenge occurs.

### Types of Meals.

1. Everyday meals. It was customary for two meals to be eaten each day, one at mid-day and one in the evening. The meal was often a social occasion to be enjoyed and an expression of hospitality and unity. A Blessing was said at the beginning and end of each meal. At the start the head of the household took a piece of bread and said a prayer of thanks: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who bringest forth bread from the earth". The bread was taken and shared. At the end of a meal a cup of wine was taken, thanks were given and all drank from it. In addition to these everyday meals there were a number of festal meals. Indeed the Old Testament is permeated by the unwritten law of hospitality.

2) Anniversary meals (Ex. 12: 14; Esth. 9: 22).

3) Religious feasts and sacrifices (Ex. 18: 12; 34: 15; 1 Kgs. 1: 9).

4) The celebration at the beginning or end of a great work (Gen. 29: 22; Judg. 14: 10; Prov. 9: 1-5; 2.Sam. 6: 19).

5) Harvest time, circumcision, weaning, marriage, funerals etc. (Gen. 21: 8).

6) Banquet of wine (mishteh - which followed a particular procedure) 1 Sam. 25: 36; 2 Sam. 13: 28.

7) Covenant meal. An important covenant was frequently inaugurated by a common meal. Some scholars would assumed that every covenant was accompanied by a meal, even when this is not expressly mentioned. Many covenant meals also appear to have been sacrificial meals, indicating that Yahweh was a third party to the agreement.(20)

All meals, though, had a strong religious element; worship for the Hebrews arose in the midst of ordinary life. The meal was shared between man and God. As Wellhausen wrote, "Year after year the return of vintage, corn harvest and sheep shearing brought together the members of the household to eat and drink in the presence of Yahweh.(21)

W. R. Smith (22) stresses the communion element of the meal as well. It was a vehicle of communication between God and man. Eating before Yahweh became eating with Yahweh, and hence a bond of fellowship.

The meal was also closely connected with sacrifice. As R. H. Kennett writes, "Every great feast was a sacrifice held in the vicinity of an altar." (23)

#### 8. The Passover.

The feast of Unleavened Bread lasted for seven days and overlapped with the feast of the Passover. The two feasts were held in Nisan. The essential celebration of the Passover was the meal, which followed a set procedure, with a set menu, order, blessings, thanksgiving, haggadah and hallel.(24) After the meal was over the guests were to spend the night in prayer (cf. Lk.22: 39f). People crowded into Jerusalem for the Passover in the time of Jesus. The feast was primarily a memorial and an occasion of worship for the people's redemption from Egypt. It also became an occasion for looking forward to the future redemption wrought by the Messiah.

#### 9. The Messianic Banquet.

The Messianic hope focused on a political Golden Age of liberation and restoration of independence and a pouring out of God's blessings. A meal would accompany this. Such Messianic feasting is referred to in Ezekiel, Micah, II Baruch and I Enoch.

Table fellowship with the Messiah is a definite motif in the Old Testament picture of the future age and it grows in prominence and detail in the apocalyptic and New Testament literature (25). (See Is. 25: 6f; 65: 13f; Mic. 5: 2-4; Zech. 9: 17; Ezek. 34: 23-24).

#### 10. Haburah Meal.

Haburah means "society or circle". A group of about ten men would meet together to share a meal. Lietzmann (26) has suggested this was a special kind of meal. E.C. Davis has called them "fraternal fellowship meals".(27) Those who met sought to do works of charity and achieve holiness. The meals in which they joined may have been celebrations for circumcision, engagement, wedding or burials. The men who met may have been Pharisees, but the connection of this meal with the Pharisees and with Jesus and his disciples is a subject which is fiercely debated by scholars. The evidence available is sketchy, but the differing viewpoints can be summarised as follows:-

a) The fellowship was for those who were made ritually pure and became members in stages. Neusner sums up the purpose of this Pharisaic haburah:- "The particular emphasis on ritual purity and tithing indicate that the Haburah was fundamentally a society for strict observance of laws of ritual, cleanliness and holy offerings." (28)

b) Alternatively the Haburah is seen as a social fellowship in which religious meals played an important role. The fellowship performed acts of piety and love. Such fellowships appear to have come into being after the Exile and became widespread by the New Testament period. (29)

Both views may contain some truth, but no help is given by the Mishnah or Josephus. Jeremias has dismissed the whole

haburah concept with the word "here again we have an ad hoc conjecture for which there is absolutely no evidence".(30)

11. Kiddûsh Meal.

This was a meal held immediately before the arrival of the Sabbath or of a feast day. The meal or sanctification of the Sabbath took place weekly. Before a feast, such as Passover, Pentecost or Tabernacles, the kiddûsh was held. The host would utter a blessing over the one cup of wine, "Blessed be he who has sanctified the Sabbath day".

The guests would then drink, hands would be washed and the bread blessed and distributed.(31)

12 Qumran Meals.(32)

These meals are mentioned by Philo,(33) Josephus,(34) and the Essene s' own writings.(35) The community was ordered in strict ranks with a strong protocol governing all actions. The order for speaking at meals was all laid down in IQS. Admission to the order was in two stages. After the first stage a novice could take part in baths of immersion, but only after the second stage could he share in cultic meals (see Josephus, Jewish War , II, viii, 7). The meal was a daily celebration in the life of the community. Ten men or more were to be present.

There was a strong eschatological flavour to this ordinary, everyday occurrence. The entire communal life at Qumran was lived in a setting of immediate messianic hope and eschatological expectancy. The meals were not free from this atmosphere. The communal meal of the Essenes is ..... set forth as a liturgical anticipation of the messianic banquet".(36)

The Qumran group separated themselves from society in order to find a better and holier way of life. "This is the regulation

for the men of the community who devote themselves to turn away from every evil and to hold fast to everything which He has commanded as His pleasure: they shall separate themselves from the assembly of men of deceit, they shall be a community, with Torah study". (Manual of Discipline V, 1, 2) Philo writes that the Essenes avoided the cities, "because of the iniquities which have become inveterate among city dwellers, for they know that their company would have a deadly effect upon their own souls".(Omnis Probus Liber Sit, XII 76) Their social forms therefore embodied their religious ideals.

### 13 Pagan Cultic Meals.(37)

It is true that such meals are unlikely to have influenced the practice of Jesus himself, but they may have influenced Luke as he handed down traditions. Ancient religions, especially Greek mystery religions, held cultic meals. These meals were held for one of the following reasons:-

- 1) For fellowship, perhaps to commemorate the dead founder of the group. Groups of tradesmen met together, for example the Silversmiths of Ephesus; burial societies met and meals were shared.
- 2) There were meals where a god or goddess was thought to preside.
- 3) The cult of Dionysus met to eat the flesh of bulls.

The people in such groups met because of a common belief or economic interest. The members tended to be socially homogenous. These meals were either totally religious meetings for ritual activities or they were social groups. The Church, however, met together on occasions that were neither totally religious, as were many pagan cults that met only for ritual activities, nor totally social, as were numerous voluntary

associations. The key to its success lay precisely in the combination of the two.(38) In this sense the Christian Church, the daughter of Judaism, "had adopted and adapted a leading characteristic of the Jewish religion, which was neither totally religious ..... nor totally social".(39)

It was this sense of community that many scholars cite for the success of Christianity. "In a world that offered an unlimited variety of religious options, there needed to be something further to retain the loyalty of converts through time. This something was the sense of community. With one major exception (Judaism), no other cult engaged its adherents at so many levels or covered so wide a range of human activities".(40)

However, from the outset the Christian church had a problem in actualizing social unity over a wide commercial, cultural and social group. For unlike its counterparts in the ancient world, the Christian groups in the first century appear to be socially diverse in character. They also display a marked internal stratification. This heteronomy had a social and religious effect. Indeed many conflicts recorded in the New Testament appear to be socially conditioned. For "a congregation so structured faces a difficult task in balancing differing expectations, interests and self-understandings that are class specific".(41) These class-specific expectations had to be balanced with the beliefs of a community of love.

Although we cannot reconstruct the details that the conflicts assumed, it would seem they were rooted in the social structure of the Christian congregation. We see Luke seeking to demonstrate in his writings that Christianity was apolitical, peaceful, a movement that crossed ethnic, religious, sexual and social boundaries. The differences that dominated the

Mediterranean world were to be eliminated in this new community and inclusive of people of God.

Luke does not expound a systematic theory of a social obligation, nor does he cultivate piety. However, tensions are represented and overcome. A social dynamic is expressed in action, and fellowship achieves embodiment. We see Jesus appealing to the hopes of the alienated. We learn "antipathy for the embarrassment that comes when rich and poor, free and slave, sit bodily at one table - real table fellowship is something quite different from charity at a distance".(42)

#### 14. The Symposium.(43)

There has been recent scholarly interest in the Greek Symposia or dinner parties, and it has been suggested they might be related to the New Testament meal setting.(44) In all Hellenistic Symposia there is a host, chief guest and a variety of other guests. Such personnel can be seen in many Lukan meal accounts.(cf.Luke 11: 37f)

It would seem, however, that a symposium is just a literary vehicle, a way of airing views and promoting scholarly discussion, whereas in the New Testament, the meal is not just a setting, but a symbol. Jesus' actions, company and teaching are all important in understanding the meal and its implications.

#### The Religious and Sociological Significance of Meals: some conclusions.

Our aim has been to describe typical social attitudes and behaviour connected with the various types of meals that took place in Palestinian and Mediterranean society. This has involved an examination of the background of Jewish meals found in the Old Testament and the various more contemporary pagan and Jewish



meal settings.

Despite the breadth and complexity of such an examination one fact stands out: the most ordinary, everyday action such as eating and drinking was an important event in the ancient world. A study of the meal shows that it influenced the perceptions, attitudes, collective behaviour and alliances of various groups within society. The meal, its religious symbols and traditions, helps to define social roles and values. It is a cultural symbol.

The Lukan meal is only comprehensible in terms of the entire social reality of which it was a part, by which it was shaped, and to which it was a particular response.

For in Israel the meal was subject to fulsome and meticulous laws of etiquette. This was viewed as part of the Israelites' sacred history. Table fellowship had a sacred role in ceremony (Ex. 18: 12; 24: 11; 1 Kgs. 3: 15) and this sacred character carried over into everyday life. For example the meal commenced with a Blessing.

Alongside this is the use of the meal in Biblical imagery. Since Biblical imagery generally makes use of commonplace actions,(45) it is natural that meals and eating customs should be used metaphorically. So the meal plays an important role both literally and metaphorically in the Old Testament. Literal meals are also rich in human and sacred symbolism. Dining established a special bond of table-fellowship and violation of this was serious (Ps.41: 10).

We note how human symbolism, already inherent in the meal, is enriched with new values when the celebration of the great events of salvation history are portrayed in sacred meal. Such meals, an obvious one being the Passover, served as signs of

covenant or memorial. For it is only human beings who conform to the complex rules of behaviour that govern a formal dinner.

A meal is not just for the purpose of nourishment. An animal eats, but a man has a meal. A meal follows a certain order and is designed to express certain concerns and hopes.(46) Thus meals are both useful and pleasurable for man. A meal is a common occurrence, when family, friends and community share each others company. To share a meal implies the idea of communion. The ritual or sacred meal extends this concept. Man and God share a meal, to seal a covenant or to commemorate a significant event. Sacred meals in the Old Testament include Gen.3; Ex.16: 1-36; Ex.24: 1-11.

To eat in God's sight is a recurring theme in the Old Testament (eg. Dt.27: 7; 14: 26). God grants his favour to man, He allows Himself to be seen and so becomes nourishment for man. (Ex.12: 1-28).

Alongside this is the memorial meal. This meal is a periodic, organized and collective occasion, designed to provoke memory or stimulate commemoration. It is a way of man and God ensuring the continuity of the history which unites them. It is a way of "eating history ..... to put it at the service of the present ...."(47) The Old Testament is full of instances when the meal signifies communion, hospitality and men sealing their friendship. In the memorial meal this concept is extended to a contract with God.

The communal aspect of such meals was also important, both in the religious and social lives of the people of the Mediterranean world. We can see the prevalence of meals in Canaanite religious life at Ras Shamra (Ugarit). We know that the temples of Baal were frequently dedicated amidst feasting, while the remains

at Shechem of the Hyksos temple indicate the presence of several banqueting rooms.

The Hebrews used meals as an opportunity to seek divine fellowship and pardon. At such feasts the divine prerogative was the blood and fat. In the Kingdom period, sacrifices were common (1 Sam.9: 11-14, 25; 1 Ch.29: 21-22; 2 Ch. 7: 8-10).

Unlike Canaanite religious meals, the ideal meals of the Hebrews were pictured devoid of debauchery and licentiousness.

In addition to the religious significance that particular feasts and festivals held, the ordinary human meal was charged with meaning. The meal provided an occasion where men were conscious of their existence as a divine gift and of the assurance of energy and life.(48)

Indeed the Jewish table involved a form of ritual. The elaborate etiquette was, as previously noted, deemed important enough to be the concern of many Rabbis. For "the history of piety in Israel is the story of the successive arrangements and revisions of available symbols".(49) One of these symbols was the meal.

The issue of just how full of religious significance the ordinary meal was in Judaism is a matter of debate among scholars. Two scholars in particular, J. Neusner and E.P. Sanders, have strongly conflicting arguments. We shall deal with the position of Neusner first:-

He writes that the dominant trait of Pharisaism and its followers before A.D.70 was, "as depicted in both the rabbinic traditions about the Pharisees and in the Gospels, concerns for certain matters of rite, in particular, eating one's meals in a state of ritual purity as if one were a Temple priest, and carefully giving the required tithes and offerings due to the

priesthood".(50) The Pharisees were seeking to discover social forms capable of embodying religious ideals, as indeed were the Essenes. Both groups sought to secure God's Kingdom on earth. Society was to be sanctified in every detail. When the Temple was not rebuilt after its destruction in A.D.70, the Pharisees urged that Temple and altar should be replaced by home and table.

In addition Neusner contends that the Pharisees held that in one's home the laws of ritual purity must be observed. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers "held one must eat his secular food, that is, ordinary, everyday meals, in a state of ritual purity as if one were a Temple priest".(51) These strict laws of purity extended to diet as well. This principle may be illustrated: "As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel. But now a man's table atones for him".(b.Berakhot, 55a)

This had the effect of setting up a barrier with an outsider, who was a potential source of ritual defilement. Every Jew was to consume his produce in the purity which characterized the Temple priest. This concern was not an unnatural one in the ancient world. Pagan and mystery cults, and even the philosophical schools, required ritual purity. The community at Qumran shared this obsession, regarding even the Temple as unclean.

The ritual purity required by the Pharisees transcended old social distinctions. It crossed barriers of "family, caste and class distinctions, the fellowship established a new polity within the old society of city and village, a community based upon the willingness of the individual to assume obligations imposed upon him by an ancient and unrepudiated commandment .....

The fellowship represented a considerable complication in the urban order".(52) Such rules made social contact intricate and delicate, leading to the disintegration of normal social patterns. A sanctity for food entered simple social relationship.

So, then, Neusner concludes that the meal was regarded as an ordinary, everyday occurrence. It was not a ritualized event. There was no communion ceremony, no rites, no specification of meals on holy occasions, rather Pharisaic table-fellowship ritualized daily life.(53)

The Jew promised to keep the ordinances on tithing, purity of foods and cleanliness, which affected his whole life. The implications were seen in every detail of his life, the results being manifest in his social, agricultural, commercial and personal relationships.(54)

E. P. Sanders (55) questions Neusner's views, and finds his analysis of the Rabbinic text unpersuasive, and failing to take into account evidence from Josephus. He questions the importance of the table to the Pharisees, and also whether lay people were required to act like priests. For example he writes: "It is noteworthy that Josephus makes a point of the fact that the Essenes would not eat other people's food (De Bello Judaico, II, 143f) but says nothing about the Pharisees' observing special food laws which set them off from other Jews".(56)

Sanders does not accept Neusner's view that the Pharisees were a small sect concerned to apply the priestly purity code to the laity. He states, "they would not have been able - even if they had wanted - to exclude others from the practice of religion in their own way; and the more exclusivist they were, the fewer would have been their followers".(57)

Sanders, in addition to pointing out the evidence of Josephus,

argues that Neusner does not take into account the numerous anonymous laws which represent common belief and practice; that is laws which concerned civil matters, worship, feasts and the Temple cult. For Sanders believes the Pharisees were not simply a purity sect, but rather were concerned with many areas.

Both Sanders and Neusner have valuable contributions to make. Sanders' views about the haberim and common people will be further discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, while Neusner's picture of the Pharisees receives further attention in chapter 4.

However, we would like to draw some conclusions from their debate. Sanders reminds us that the subject of the Pharisees is an extremely complex one. Indeed, it is more complex than many scholars have led us to believe. The Pharisees are often presented in a simplistic way. As Sanders writes, they are often portrayed as "an intolerant bunch of bigots".(58) The truth is that much of the Biblical evidence regarding the Pharisees is diverse, with different Gospel writers presenting their material from a particular perspective. Scholarship is becoming increasingly aware of the complexity of Judaism in the first century.

Nevertheless, the Gospel writers all seem to present the Pharisees as having a certain amount of influence and concern for ritual purity, particularly in the area of table-fellowship. They are also seen to be concerned with other matters of Law. They are seen in conflict with Jesus over the issue of table-fellowship, as we shall demonstrate in chapter 4.

Neusner's position fails to take account of all the relevant primary sources, as Sanders points out. Certainly the literature of the time is complex and much of it is concerned with table-

fellowship, or rules pertaining to it. However, with regards to the criticism about his lack of concern for Josephus, Josephus' view was not itself exhaustive or unbiased.

So we are left with the key question, was the meal a sacred event for the first century Jew, or just a routine matter? It is our view that the meal was fundamentally a sacred event for the Jew. This would seem to make the most sense of the evidence. This view encompasses the later rabbinic material, much of which discusses the issue. It explains the problem of table-fellowship, as presented by the Gospel writers, particularly Luke (see the ensuing chapters). In addition it is in accordance with the Old Testament evidence, the parallels of the Greek mystery cults and the pagan sects of the time. Furthermore the sociological challenge of Jesus, pictured in Jesus' meals with sinners, fits into this contention. All the above points are difficult to justify if the meal is regarded as just a routine matter. Although it's precisely its routine, everyday nature that allows it, on one level anyway, to take on such sociological significance.

The issue of table-fellowship did have vast social repercussions, as Neusner notes, meals occupied an important place in the Jewish and Mediterranean world. The Jewish world had a sacred notion of nourishment and the meal. Food, the cause of life, was a direct gift from God. Every meal had a certain religious character. Meals expressed a special bond with family, friends and community. The significance accorded to the fact that it was unwise to dine with the irreligious, the unclean, the pagan or sinner demonstrates this. One's dinner guests or companions reflected on one's own prestige and standing within the community.

Meals were significant in the life of Jesus and his disciples. His work is seen to rest, to a large degree, on the hospitality extended to him. It is during the course of meals that Jesus manifests his mission, his power and message.

The evidence examined in this chapter helps us to appreciate the accounts of Jesus' meals in the Gospels. The importance of suitable companions reminds us of Jesus' association with tax-gatherers and sinners and the criticisms which that led to. The concept of entertaining the wandering stranger helps us to make sense of Jesus' sudden invitation on the road to Emmaus. The open dining room allowed the prostitute to enter Simon the Pharisee's house and allowed the critical onlookers to attack the company Jesus kept. The washing of hands traditions were ignored and thus occasioned comment. The whole Jewish belief in hospitality aided Jesus' mission, but occasioned the charge that he was a "glutton and a drunkard" in contrast to the later Rabbis who were not greedy and did not readily accept invitations to banquets (Yoma, 866, Aboth. de. R. Nathan, l. XXVI). At the same time, the history of memorial meals helps us to appreciate and examine the Last Supper. The whole concept and practice of meals shows us the enormous social connotations and the challenge Jesus issued to the conventions of the time.

We conclude that for the Jew in Palestine in the first century a meal was eaten at the table of God and was full of religious significance and social meaning. A meal "offered a special opportunity for intimacy and was governed by convention".(59) The meal was not just a physical necessity, but a religious and communal expression.



Footnotes. The Concept of Table-Fellowship.

(1) See the bibliography for the works of Jacob Neusner in this area.

(2) See the bibliography for the works of B. Malina, W. Meeks, H. Kee and G. Theissen in this area.

(3) It is at least of equal important what a society affirms about its life world and what it takes for granted. See H.C. Kee, Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective, pp.177.

(4) For example: Gen.18: 1-2; Exodus 2: 20; Deut.23: 4; Judg.13: 15; 19: 15; Isaiah 58: 7; Job 13: 22.

(5) Intertestamental Literature e.g. Ben Sira in Ecclus. 31: 12-18; 32: 3-12. Here the diner is warned against greed at table and the theme of conversation at table is discussed. Manual of Discipline IQS; 2 Column Document IQSa; Philo, Every Good Man is Free, xiii, 91; Hypothetica 11, 11; Judith; Tobit 7: 9.

First Century Literature e.g. Josephus, Jewish War VIII, 5, 7, 8. Josephus gives an account of an Essenes breakfast.

Later Rabbinic Literature.

The discussion of this topic ranges over a wide period of time. Two tractates were added to the Talmud devoted entirely to etiquette - The Dérek 'Erets and the Dérek 'Érets Zūtā. These can be seen as "guides to good manners". Instructors included the injunction that it was not considered good manners to speak while eating or to wipe the plates or scrape together the bread, as though you were still hungry. See also Toseftā Bērākh; Bābā Bathrā; Mishnah Ber. chapters 6-8. See e.g. J. Bowker, The Targums & Rabbinic Literature, pp.210, 223 for discussion and further references.

(6) e.g. Plato, The Symposium, Plutarch, The Dinner Party of the Seven Sages. Ovid. Met. 8, 613-715.

(7) The word "call" here is qara. Elsewhere it is used for a guest, one who is summoned by another to partake of his food (1 Kings 1: 41; 49; Pr.9: 18; Zp.1: 7)

(8) Compare also Palestinian Targum (N. Ngl. FTS) version of Gen.35: 9.

(9) G. Stahlin, "ἑένος, ἑένια", T.W.N.T. 5 ed. Kittel pp.2-36.

(10) cf. The Emmaus episode, Lk.24: 30f.

(11) Ps. of Solomon 17: 32; Ps.72: 11. The Gentiles will be spared in the Messianic Age.

(12) M. Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, I, pp.92-5. See also Hengel's discussion of Koheleth and universalism, ibid, pp.115f.

(13) W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p.63. For further details see pp.63-68.

(14) Here used in the secondary sense of "omnipresent God".

- (15) J. Neusner, Judaism and the Beginning of Christianity, p.39.
- (16) M. Douglas, Rules and Meanings. The Anthropology of Everyday Knowledge, p.261.
- (17) But see Tob. 7: 9.
- (18) At least two attempts to justify the practice using the Pentateuch can be found in the Talmud. One uses Lev.15: 11 (Chullin: 105<sup>ca</sup>), another Lev.20: 7 (Bē'rākh, 53b).
- (19) See Dērek 'Erets and the Dērek 'Érets Zūtā. For further detail see footnotes 5 of this chapter.
- (20) See W.O.E. Oesterley, Sacrifices in Ancient Israel: Their Origin, Purposes and Development, p.168f.
- (21) J. Wellhausen: Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel.
- (22) W.R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites.
- (23) R.H. Kennett, Ancient Hebrew Social Life and Custom as Indicated by Law, Narrative and Metaphor, p.44. See also W.R. Smith, op.cit. p.255 "Everywhere we find that a sacrifice ordinarily involves a feast, and that a feast cannot be provided without a sacrifice".
- (24) See 'Table 1: The Feast of the Passover' in I.H. Marshall, Last Supper and Lord's Supper, p.178. For additional information see pp.21-23.
- (25) See E.C. Davis, "The Significance of the Shared Meal in Luke-Acts" for a discussion concerning the connection of the Lukan meals and the Banquet Motif.
- (26) H. Lietzmann, Mass and The Lord's Supper, pp.165-71, p.185. See also J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, pp.246-52. S. Westerholm, Jesus and Scribal Authority, pp.13-15.
- (27) Op.cit. chapter 1.
- (28) J. Neusner, Fellowship in Judaism: First Century and Today, p.18.
- (29) See H. Lietzmann, Mass and Lord's Supper, p.170f, p.185.
- (30) J. Jeremias, Eucharistic Words of Jesus, p.30. See also E. Schürer, History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, vol.2, section 26.
- (31) See G.H. Box, "The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist", J.T.S. (3), pp.357-69. Box espouses the view that the Last Supper was a Kiddūsh meal, not a Passover meal. I.H. Marshall rejects this in Last Supper and Lord's Supper, p.20.
- (32) See I.H. Marshall, ibid. pp.23-26. S. Liebermann, "The Discipline of the So-Called Dead Sea Manual of Discipline", J.B.L. 71, pp.199-206. J.F. Priest, "The Messiah and the Meal

in IQSA", J.B.L. 82, pp.95-100. K. Stendahl, The Scrolls and the New Testament. G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective, pp.94-96, 110-112.

(33) Philo, Every Good Man is Free, xiii, 91. Hypothetica 11, 11.

(34) Josephus, Jewish War II, Viii, 5, 7, 8.

(35) Manual of Discipline IQS. 2-Column Document IQSA.

(36) F. Cross, Ancient Library of Qumran, rev.ed. p.90.

(37) I.H. Marshall, op.cit. pp.27-29.

(38) J. Gager, Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity, p.131.

(39) P. Henry, New Directions in New Testament Study, p.202.

(40) J. Gager, op.cit. p.130.

(41) G. Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, p.146.

(42) ibid. p.167.

(43) Plato, The Symposium. Plutarch, The Dinner Party of the Seven Sages.

(44) E. Spring Steele, "Lk.11: 37-54 - A Modified Hellenistic Symposium?", J.B.L. 103/3, pp.379-394. He argues that the Hellenistic Symposium is imposed on Lukan passages.

(45) See G.B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible. M. Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal", Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences", (101) No.1, pp.61-83. M. Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.

(46) J.B. Wolowelsky, "The Human Meal". Jud. 26, p.92. P. Rouillard, "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist Part 1", Worship Part 52, p.431.

(47) P. Rouillard, ibid. p.439.

(48) ibid. p.435.

(49) J. Neusner, Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity, p.37.

(50) J. Neusner, "Emergent Rabbinic Judaism in a Time of Crisis", in Early Rabbinic Judaism, p.43.

(51) ibid. p.44.

(52) J. Neusner, Fellowship in Judaism, First Century and Today. p.17.

(53) See J. Neusner, Early Rabbinic Judaism, p.45.

(54) See J. Neusner, Fellowship in Judaism, First Century and Today, pp.31-34.

(55) See Jesus and Judaism, p.188f.

(56) ibid. p.188.

(57) ibid. p.389.

(58) ibid. p.198.

(59) D. Juel, Luke-Acts, p.88.

Chapter 3: Jesus Eats with Tax-Collectors.

"Why do You Eat and Drink with Tax-Collectors?" (Lk.5: 30)

On several occasions Jesus is seen mixing in the company of social and religious outcasts, company that was deemed unacceptable, particularly to the Pharisees. Jesus' name is often linked with that of tax-collectors, publicans, sinners and prostitutes. The meals Jesus had with such people are significant. The Christian tradition has presented the memory with the utmost care, and it is strongly attested in the Gospels.(1) (Lk.5: 27-32; Lk.13: 28-30; Lk.15: 2; Lk.19: 1-10 and par.)

The Lukan Jesus is portrayed from the beginning as a marginal person in Israel who has no proper dwelling place. (Lk.2: 6-7; cf.Lk.9: 16; 23: 42-43; 9:58 Acts 2: 29-36) The "travel narrative" (9: 51-19: 28) is unique to the third Gospel. Here Jesus is portrayed as one constantly on the road, sometimes finding hospitality with others. (10: 38-42; 11: 37-54; 14: 1-24; 19: 1-10) So the marginal Messiah welcomes other marginal people and invites them to the banquet of the Kingdom. (14: 16-24; cf.13: 24-30; 23: 43).

Luke makes clear the scope of Jesus' mission in both his volumes. (4: 18-19; Acts 2) The Messiah comes to seek and save the lost, those in need of a doctor, not to gather the righteous. (Lk.19: 10; Lk.5: 31-32) The Lukan Jesus makes clear through word and deed that he does not recognize religious-social exclusion and discrimination. Jesus seeks to make a reconciled community. We see his

care for women who were often despised.(2) Lk.10: 38-42; Lk.7: 36-50; 13: 10-17; 7: 11-17; 8: 2; 8: 1-3; 23: 27-31). We also see him turning to rich (19: 1-10) and poor (6: 20-26; 1: 52f; 12: 13-21, 22-34; 14: 7-11; 16: 19-31) The down-trodden will experience a reversal of their present unhappy lot. The idea of reversal of situation is not confined to wealth and poverty. The sinner will be justified, not the "righteous person". This is illustrated in the parable of the tax-collector and the Pharisee.(Lk.18: 10-14)

Jesus does not stop at the boundary of Israel. He indicates there is also a place for the Samaritan in his concern (Lk.9: 51-56; 17: 11-19; 10: 30-37), while the scope of Jesus' ministry also includes the Gentiles.

(2: 32; 7: 1-9; 13: 28; 24: 47; Acts 10) The Gospel seeks to make clear that in God's Kingdom all are recipients and that no-one can be disqualified as religiously inferior. For many of the groups mentioned in the above paragraphs were denied equality or even refused community in contemporary Jewish society.(3) To associate with such people and to contradict normal social behaviour was to earn Jesus criticism and make him enemies. For Jesus' bold actions went far beyond contemporary consciousness.

The consequences of Jesus' message and actions were far-reaching. Religious and social dimensions could not be separated from one another. What happened "before God" had immediate social consequences in the community. The body of Christ, the church, was a social reality. The assimilated and assumed patterns of society were under attack. Because of the nature of that society Jesus was not just attacking social behaviour, but religious convictions as

well.(4)

It is perhaps difficult for us to envisage how great was the radical change required in attitudes, values and expectations. The identifiable situations, social norms, cultural cues that people relied on for acceptable ways of behaviour were reversed in Christ. New modes of behaviour were introduced, based on totally new precepts. Those previously discriminated against were to be accepted into a community whose guiding principle was love.

It was through table-fellowship that the moral distinctions of righteous and sinner and the ritual distinction of clean and unclean found expression. In Luke there are two main accounts of Jesus' table-fellowship with tax-collectors and other social outcasts:-

i) The calling of Levi (Lk.5: 27-32)

ii) The meeting with Zacchaeus (Lk.19: 1-10)

In order to understand the significance of these passages we need to have a clear understanding of the position of the tax-gatherer or publican in the society of the time.(5)

Taxes in Roman times were collected by state officials, but the customs were farmed out to publicani. The noun  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\nu\eta\varsigma$  is used to denote such people in the New Testament. Such a person purchased from the state the rights to official taxes and dues and collected them from the people who owed them. Throughout antiquity, as often in modern times, tax-collectors were feared and disliked. No one pays taxes willingly to the state, especially if, as in Palestine, the state is an alien one. When the officials acting for this alien state were native Jews, their class became the object of popular resentment.

All foreign domination was obnoxious to the Jews. This was not just for racial or national, but also for religious, reasons. God was Israel's King and only rulers appointed by Him were acceptable. But apart from the publicans' co-operation and collaboration with a foreign government, there were additional reasons for their unpopularity.

The publican had paid or pledged to pay the state a specific sum. He, and his underlings, had to collect more than this if they were not to suffer financial loss, or even incur severe penalties. But their demands were often excessive. As they were often the only ones with precise knowledge of the relevant statutes it was all too easy for them to charge more and make huge profits. Hence tax-collectors were seen as greedy, dishonest men. So publicans were disliked on a purely human level. They were prospering and acquiescing at a time when the nation was subject and economically burdened. For in addition to the Roman taxation there was a religious taxation. As each system had been designed separately the result was an over-taxed people.(6)

As we have seen from our examination of table-fellowship and socially-acceptable behaviour, to eat with such men as tax-collectors was unthinkable.(7) Such behaviour from Jesus caused a stir. The first recorded occasion of this is Luke in -

#### The Calling of Levi (Lk.5: 27-32)

We have called this section, which studies the meal recorded in Lk.5: 27-32, "The Calling of Levi". This is the most common title given to this section of Luke's Gospel. It implies that this is why this particular story has been preserved, to record the historical calling by Jesus of a



disciple. That this is one purpose of this section is undoubtedly true. But is this the most important point? That this man is a tax-collector, and that his call is celebrated by himself, Jesus and his associates in a meal, is often regarded as incidental or factual information, rather in the way the symposium is seen as a literary device.

The meal is in our view fundamental to the passage and Jesus' message. The man's job and hence his standing in society are equally crucial to the pericope's preservation. His position in society renders table-fellowship between his kind and Jesus impossible. This is the pivot of the story. The fact that Levi has been called by Jesus as a disciple and table-companion is remarkable. Luke is concerned to emphasize that Jesus ate and associated with disreputable people. (Lk.5: 29, 30, 31, 32, 33) Jesus is seen here to shun the socially-accepted norms of behaviour in his day. He reverses the values and expectations of his cultural situation. Surely Ellis'(8) title to the passage, "Signs of the New Age" is an appropriate one. (cf.Lk.14: 15-24)

The Pharisees and lawyers react vigorously.

Topical arrangement appears to have linked this controversy with Pharisees and scribes to the former one (5: 21); likewise the pronouncement about the forgiveness of sins in the former (5: 21) provides the background for Jesus' association with sinners in this scene.

The Lukan story is dependent on Mk.2: 13-17.(9) Luke does modify the Marcan material by redacting it in a number of ways.(10) These, where relevant, will be mentioned in our exegesis. The story has been variously classified form-critically.(11) The purpose of the story would seem

to be to reflect an early Christian controversy. The early church is answering an objection about its consorting with undesirables in Palestinian society, by depicting Jesus as so engaged.

The calling of Levi is presented as being, if not accidental, at least on impulse. (Lk.5: 27; Mt.9: 9; Mk.2: 14) It seems that Jesus happened to be walking past Levi and asked him to "follow". The important point is that Levi did not seek out Jesus, rather Jesus sought Levi. As Montefiore states, "Jesus did not avoid sinners as the Pharisees did, but sought them out; this was a new and sublime contribution to the development of religion and morality."(12)

E. P. Sanders (13) has criticised the tendency to oversimplify the views of the Pharisees regarding sinners and repentance. Indeed there has been a tendency to generalise and confuse terminology, and the fact that there were differing views proffered by groups within Judaism over 800 years is often overlooked. So Sanders challenges many commonly accepted viewpoints, arguing that many scholars have failed to examine the literature adequately enough. Sanders particularly re-examines the terms 'sinner', 'wicked', 'poor' and 'amme ha-arets'.(14)

Sanders argues that to make table-fellowship the real point of the "Jesus and sinners" issue is to trivialize it.(15) However, he fails to grasp that in the action of table-fellowship Jesus is enacting his beliefs about the Kingdom.(5: 31-32; 19: 9; cf.Mt.18: 11; Lk.15) Indeed Sanders sees the entire episode as "obviously unrealistic".(16) His reasons are tenuous: "We can hardly imagine the Pharisees as policing Galilee to see whether or not an otherwise upright

man ate with sinners".(17) The Pharisees' attitude was based on Lev.10: 10, "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and clean." From this came "the Pharisaic idea of salvation by segregation.(18) Jesus was not regarded by the Pharisees as 'any man', he was making claims beyond that of an "upright man". He was setting up a new principle of salvation, indeed He himself was that salvation.(5: 31-32; 19: 9-10; cf.Lk.15) He forgives sins (5: 21; 7: 47-49), heals on the Sabbath (Lk.6: 1-11, 14) and raises the status of women (8: 1-3; 10: 38f) He forgives a prostitute's sins in front of the Pharisees (7: 47-49) and criticizes them in the meal episode of 11: 37f. (cf.Mt.31.) He also draws huge crowds.(eg.9: 10f) The Pharisees begin to try and trap him (11: 54: 6: 11)

Nevertheless, Sanders does think that the charge that Jesus associated with sinners is an authentic one. If Levi was typical he would be greedy and a cheat. If he was good at his trade he would be a rich man, but on being issued Christ's invitation, Luke tells us, "he rose to his feet, left everything behind and followed him".(v.28) This Lukan addition has no counterpart in either Mark (5: 11) or Matthew (14: 33). The implication is that Levi began a new life and everything connected with his life as a tax-collector was relinquished (cf.Lk.19: 8) ("Followed" is in the imperfect tense and so literally means "was following him", and so stresses the continuous nature of the act).(19) This points to the fact, stated more clearly at the end of the story (v.32), that repentance is part of the kerygma of Jesus. This repentance leads to forgiveness.

This is certainly the traditional interpretation of

this passage; Perrin(20) for example gives such an exegesis. Jesus offered forgiveness to sinners who were regarded as ritually and morally unclean. To have dealings with such people was regarded as terrible, or at least unwise. However, if the episodes had involved Jesus only talking to Levi, Levi repenting, becoming a disciple and relinquishing his trade, surely there was nothing to object to. Even if Jesus had talked to the other tax-collectors and associates of Levi no 'crime' would have been committed. No charge would have been made if Jesus had only tried to get the sinner to mend his ways.

Perrin states that Jesus was accused of offering sinners forgiveness and that real sinners were "widely regarded as beyond hope of penitence or forgiveness....".(21) This view is plainly erroneous. Surely, as Sanders points out, it is not that Jesus offered them God's forgiveness, but that He offered Himself as the channel for forgiveness. He himself had the authority to offer this. Forgiveness was always available to the repentant in Judaism, but Jesus arrogantly, it seemed to the Jews, offered His own acceptance. (cf.Lk.5: 21)

Jesus offered this acceptance concretely in the form of table-fellowship. The implication is that the action and teaching merged into a single message; this would also be true of later meals. "Table-fellowship as interpreted by the table talk constituted the Gospel."(22) New wine was being put into used wineskins.(Lk.5: 36)

Levi's reaction to his acceptance, forgiveness and association with Jesus is joy. His associates are invited to experience acceptance too. V.30 refers to them as

"tax-collectors and sinners". The juxtaposition of these two groups is noteworthy, emphasizing Jesus' association with outcasts.(cf.Jn.7: 49; Mk.7: 1-12) It occurs again in 7: 34 (Mt.11: 19) Lk.15: 1 and implicitly in 19: 7. The tax-collectors are associated with other evil people - robbers, evildoers, adulterers (18: 11) harlots (Mt.21: 32) and Gentiles (Mt.18: 17) We find that the association of 'tax-collectors and sinners' can be paralleled in Rabbinic literature with the phrase 'publicans and robbers'. They were not so categorized because they had made themselves like Gentiles, i.e. quislings, but rather because of their dishonesty.(cf.Lk.3: 12-13; 19: 1-10) In later Rabbinic writings we see that sinners were those who were immoral, dishonest or involved in degrading occupations.(M. Sandhedrin 3: 3, b.Sanh.25b; M. BabaQamma 10: 2) It seems tax-collectors were sinners mainly because of the dishonesty which often characterized their activity.

The Pharisees and Lawyers object to the actualisation of Jesus' forgiveness in table-fellowship.(5: 30; 15: 2; 19: 7) Ellis takes this questioning about Jesus' association with sinners to be subsequent complaining, as these people would not be present at such a gathering. This is not necessary; open dining rooms enabled onlookers to comment upon and regard the guests at a meal. Surely such an action by Jesus would be unlikely to go unnoticed in a village community.

We have stated that the Pharisees objected to Jesus' authority to offer forgiveness. Sanders examines this contention further. The table companions of Jesus are still referred to as sinners. Sanders believes that is because in the eyes of the Pharisees they were still regarded as wicked.

Jesus offered unconditional forgiveness. He didn't require repentance as it was normally understood, and therefore the tax-collectors remained sinners in the eyes of Judaism.

Jesus did not require them to make restitution, sacrifice and turn in obedience to the law. "Jesus offered companionship to the wicked of Israel as a sign that God would save them, and He did not make his association dependent on their conversion to the Law".(23) Jesus accepted people while they were yet sinners.(Mt.21: 31)

Jesus' actions implied that He knew who God would include in His Kingdom. This downgraded the machinery of righteousness and pushed Jesus' stance close to impiety. This view of Sanders, he admits, is largely speculative, but it does appear to make more sense of the material than that commonly held, as for example by Perrin. It is difficult to believe that if Jesus called sinners to repentance, the Pharisees would object to such repentance and forgiveness.

Sanders' viewpoint does not emphasize enough that the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, objected to Jesus' personal authority to forgive sins.(See Lk.5: 21) Nevertheless it makes valuable points in its judgement that the offence is Jesus' offer of unconditional forgiveness.

Table-fellowship also has a more valuable role in the issue than Sanders would assign to it. It promised that such people were forgiven without the normal mechanism of forgiveness. They were accepted now by the Messiah and would be included in the Messianic banquet of the Kingdom. To the Pharisees such actions flouted Jesus' message, making it difficult to ignore.

On regarding the scene the Pharisees grumbled and

complained, and were unable to understand Jesus' deliberate defilement. As Godet states, this was totally "at variance with the theocratic notions of decorum".(24) Jesus lowered his own standing in society by his actions.

The Scribes and Pharisees are understandably curious when they challenge the disciples.(5: 30) There is no answer recorded from the disciples, Jesus give the reply "It is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick; I have not come to invite virtuous people, but to call sinners to repentance".(5: 31-32) The "healthy" and "sick" are parallel with the "virtuous" and "sinners". The principle of "salvation by association"(25) is set up.(cf.Lk.19: 9-10) The idea had no established parallel in Judaism. Even John the Baptist had established repentance or conversion which then led on to communion. But Jesus established contact with an openness that shocked the establishment of the day. He cut across the regulations concerned with righteousness that were in danger of obscuring the real revelation of God.

When Jesus refers to the righteous, it is difficult to tell whether this saying, found in all the synoptic Gospels, is said ironically or not. "Righteous" or "virtuous" was probably a self-designation, but also one given in recognition of his moral and ritual standards. However, it would seem that it does not mean that the Scribes and Pharisees were not also sinners. For Jesus saw no place for self-complacency and pride; it had no part in salvation if then all were sinners, and no one good but God, separation was senseless. And as the previous episode shows (Lk.5: 17-26), and this episode develops further, here was a man with the authority to forgive sins.

Jesus' meals with tax-collectors and sinners are not just social events or even an expression of humanity and sympathy with the despised, but they had deeper significance. They are an expression of Jesus' message and mission.(Mk.2: 7) They anticipate the eschatological celebration. "The inclusion of sinners in the community of salvation, achieved in table-fellowship, is the most meaningful expression of the message of the redeeming love of God." (26)

We see similar ideas being expressed by Josephus.(Ant. 19. 7.1) King Agrippa I had Silas, who had fallen into disgrace, brought to his table to signify that he had forgiven him. The risen Lord later eats with disciples who had forsaken Him.(Lk.24: 30, 35, 43)

The story is, then, a further indication of Jesus' authority against that of the Pharisees. Jesus is able to forgive sins (Lk.5: 17-26) and to establish new principles of table-fellowship. Jesus sees the subject of contact with sinners and God's forgiveness in a revolutionary light. It is interesting to note that Luke later sharply contrasts the Pharisaic and tax gatherers' attitude to acceptance by God in parable form.(Lk.18: 9-14)

Later on, Luke provides further explanation of Jesus' reply (v.31-32) and the concept it embodies. This is provided mainly by way of parables, for example the Parable of the Great Feast (14: 15-24), the Lost Sheep (15: 3-7) and the Lost Coin (15: 8-10), and particularly the parable of the Lost or Prodigal Son (15: 11-31).(27)

In the last mentioned, Jesus gives dramatic expression to the father's joy at the return of his scapegoat son. It is easy to identify the feelings of the elder son with



the Pharisees. The message seems to be that decent people should not congratulate themselves on their virtue and should not disdain others who celebrate the fact they have been given back their self-esteem, hope and dignity.

In Matthew (9: 9-13), Jesus' reply to the Pharisees is supplemented with the phrase from Hosea 6: 6, "I require mercy not sacrifice" and the injunction to learn what the text means. In Hosea the context is that of a dialogue about insincere worship and repentance. Perhaps the Pharisees are not as righteous as they think; repentance from self-complacency, insincere worship and the attitude that it is sufficient if correct rules and sacrificial procedures are followed, need to be examined. Rather, loyalty, knowledge of God and, most importantly, mercy are required.

The Pharisees, however, appear to disregard Jesus' statement, and in all three synoptic Gospels go on to question Jesus about the practice of fasting. The link between these sections would seem to be that Jesus is seen to associate with the wrong people (5: 27-32), He is seen to be a religious man, so how are these two facts related? Jesus is then compared to the other religious men of his day, particularly with John the Baptist. Even, "John's disciples are much given to fasting and the practice of prayer, and so are the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink".(5: 33) So Jesus' authority and identity are questioned.

The fact that Jesus is being criticized in the context of a meal may have triggered such questions. On the other hand, the Pharisees were given to fasting on Monday and Thursday, and this may have been the basis of their questioning. The Pharisees compare the practice of John's and the Pharisees'

disciples with that of Jesus.(cf.Mt.11: 18-19) We can only speculate whether Jesus expressly taught that His form of religion was quite difference from that of John and the Pharisees.

Jesus does not dismiss fasting, but says rather that the time for that will come. Indeed His followers will have to renounce themselves and carry a cross.(see Lk.14: 27; Mt.10: 38; Mk.8: 34) But at present their bridegroom is with them, and people must celebrate as if at a wedding. As with Levi, the reaction should be to celebrate his presence. This and other passages have led some to refer to the first half of Luke's gospel as the 'wedding period' of Jesus' ministry, a time when His ministry is seen in terms of a Messianic banquet. The bridegroom is celebrating. Such episodes become less frequent as He approaches the cross.

The above mentioned links may be the only ties between this section (Lk.5: 33-35) and the calling of Levi, although we note the  $\omicron\upsilon\delta\epsilon$  with which the pericope begins. However, even if none of these links are historical, they have value as being Lukan and part of his message. People should celebrate the reign, presence and acceptance of God. We see the prefiguring of the Messianic banquet of the end-times.

Jesus, we are told, then tells his audience a parable, about patched clothes and old wine-skins. Again, the link with the Levi story may be either historical or Lukan. In either case the tie is important and close.

The parable appears to be related to the old ways and the new, the ways of Judaism and of Jesus. There can be no mixing or compromise between the two. Jesus' way of

life is more than just the old life revised or with a bit tacked on. And anyone who has tasted the new way of life, offered by Jesus, will not want the old, for he will see how good the new is. His new order will not fit the old patterns; to mix the old and new would be to ruin all. Jesus came not to dispense with religion, but to inaugurate a New Age. Part of this New Age is Jesus' table-fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners, illustrated in the Levi story.

This closes the Levi episode, but before we draw any further conclusions, we move on to explore the second Lukan narrative concerning Jesus' table-fellowship with tax-collectors.

Jesus and Zacchaeus Lk.19: 1-10.

The story of Zacchaeus seems to be related to the call of Levi.(28) The story is without parallel in the other Gospels and appears to come from Luke's source 'L'. The basic outline of it seems to be very tenable within the Gospel tradition, and there seems no obvious reason to doubt its validity.(see Lk.5: 27-32; 15: 2; Mt.21: 31) Luke sees Zacchaeus as an outcast of Palestinian society, another of the lost whom Jesus has come to save.(see Lk.15)

Form-critically this episode seems to be a pronouncement story (v.9), although not all scholars have classified it as such.(29) However, we are concerned not so much with the development of it, but with its present Lukan form.

Jesus and Zacchaeus met in Jericho. The previous 'pericope' tells of Jesus' healing of a blind man there.

The place-name may be the only link between these two episodes, or we may be supposed to understand that these two meetings happen on the same visit.

Luke presents to us two men eager to meet Jesus in Jericho. The first man is healed of a physical defect, the second is spiritually reformed. We are told that Zacchaeus was a rich man, a superintendent of taxes or the chief tax-collector.(v.2) The implication is that his wealth was a result of his activities as a tax-collector. He was probably, "contractor-in-chief of local customs - dues". This meant he would purchase these and then lease them to sub-contractors. He would therefore receive a share of all revenue and tax collected, whether this was collected by himself or by underlings.

Jericho (30) was a trading town in itself, as well as being on the principle routes for goods entering Judea from the east. This meant Zacchaeus' profits would not be small and that Zacchaeus would be wealthy, no doubt by both legal and also more dubious means.

We are told that Zacchaeus was small (31) and unable to see Jesus through the crowd that had collected.(v.3)

He was so eager to see Jesus that he climbed a sycamore tree. Just as the blind beggar had (Lk.18: 38-39) called out several times to Jesus and had not been discouraged from doing so by the views of others; similarly Zacchaeus is determined, and makes every effort to see Jesus. No doubt the blind man had heard of Jesus' healing miracles and Zacchaeus had heard of His associations with "tax-collectors and sinners". Perhaps he had heard of Levi's conversion and was fascinated that his fellow tax-collector should turn his back on his wealth to follow this man. As an ostracized and shunned member of society he found the message Jesus preached as a friend to his class to be attractive and

fascinating. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to suggest in the light of the later part of the story that Zacchaeus was not only determined to see Jesus, but also that his actions reflect an eagerness for acceptance.

Luke tells us in his Gospel of the many different reactions Jesus prompted, and the many different reasons for which people wished to see Jesus. Herod (9: 9) was anxious to see Jesus out of curiosity; he did not know what to make of the reports he had heard. Others wished to see Jesus perform signs and miracles.(11: 16, 29) Such people sought to witness the dramatic, and test Jesus out. Still others sought out Jesus in order to be healed.(Lk.7: 1-10; 8: 40-42; 43-48; 9: 37-43; 18: 35-43 etc.)

Zacchaeus did not fall into any of these categories; he was not curious, nor did he want a sign or healing. Zacchaeus was interested in what Jesus had to say, in His message to the lost. His eagerness portrays not a man who was mildly interested; rather he makes a big effort to see Jesus.

Jesus establishes contact with Zacchaeus and calls him by name. The fact that Jesus 'recognises'(32) Zacchaeus and makes this overture to him, seems to be the turning-point in Zacchaeus' life. Jesus says "I must come and stay with you today".(v.5) The 'must'(33) matches the eagerness of Zacchaeus. He climbs down quickly and welcomes Jesus gladly.(v.6) Again we see Jesus' implicit authority to forgive sins and instigate acceptance.(34)(v.9-10) The story backs up Sanders' notion of unconditional forgiveness. Jesus is challenging religious conviction, socially accepted behaviour and deeply-held expectations in this one action.

The action of eating with a sinner occasions grumbling. (v.7)(cf.15: 2; 5: 30). It is no longer just the Pharisees who murmur, as in the Levi story, but all who grumble. The reaction of the crowd is in plain contrast to the actions of Jesus. They immediately show their prejudice and point out that Zacchaeus is a "sinner". Jesus goes out of his way to meet Zacchaeus and establish contact. He wishes to stay and eat with him as a sign of friendship, forgiveness and acceptance. As Godet comments, Jesus shows "sovereign independence of human opinion".(35) The outcast Zacchaeus is labelled "as sinner", yet Jesus wishes to be his guest. The crowd(36) feel Jesus will 'pollute' himself by such an association. Nothing reveals more clearly than Jesus eating with a sinner the divine reversal of social norms and men's reaction to that reversal.

Having been unconditionally accepted by Christ, Zacchaeus makes worthy acknowledgement of His overture. He makes a spontaneous response to Jesus' contact, by offering half his possessions to charity and by offering to repay anyone cheated four times.(v.8. cf.Exod.22: 1; 21: 27; 2 Sam. 12: 6; Lev.6: 5; Num.5: 6-7, (37), Mur.19: 10 (A.D.111) Roman Law also required fourfold restitution.) This emphasizes the genuineness of his conversion.

The crowd have pointed out that he is a sinner, but Zacchaeus and Jesus already realize this. Zacchaeus makes no attempt to hide this fact, but wishes to show himself worthy. He renounces the service of money (cf.Lk.12: 33; 16: 19; 19: 9-10) His vow indicates his wish to change his life.(cf. Levi Lk.5: 28) The vow is made before Zacchaeus and Jesus reach the house, before Jesus has talked

with him. It is Jesus' act of acceptance that overwhelms Zacchaeus into this response.

The self-righteous crowd is contrasted with the unrighteous sinner in their response to Jesus' actions.(cf.5: 30; 15: 2) This reminds us of the parable of the tax-collector and the Pharisee.(Lk.18: 9-14) As Geldenhuys says, "This is a beautiful example of the triumph of the forgiving grace of God in the actions of Jesus", (38) and all but Zacchaeus miss it. Their errors are pointed out to them (v.9-10), but they become more entrenched in their position. The crowd were offended, but Zacchaeus is repentent and joyful.

Jesus makes it clear to the grumbling crowd that despite Zacchaeus' occupation as a tax-collector, he is entitled to the blessings of Abraham, like any other Israelite.(v.9) Jesus has visited the house and "salvation has come to this house today!" Acceptance by Jesus equals salvation. The contrast of salvation coming to "this house" with the grumbling of the critical crowd is significant. "This man too is a son of Abraham, and the son of Man has come to seek and save the lost."(v.10. cf.Lk.5: 31-32) Thus the Lukan Jesus is not only come to preach the Kingdom (4: 43; 9: 11) and to fulfil prophecies of consolation from Isaiah (4: 18-19), but also to act as a shepherd to a scattered people as promised in Ezekiel 34: 16. (cf.Lk.15: 1-7; Mt.18: 10-14) Chrysostom points out here the moral sonship: Abraham offered his heir to the Lord, Zacchaeus his inheritance.

But surely the main point is: this man dubbed outcast and sinner by others is the man Jesus wishes to stay with. He seeks out this reject and refers to him as the true son of Abraham. He is pointing out to the crowds and to Zacchaeus

that the Son of Man accepts him. Jesus has the authority to include him in Israel, and does not seek to exclude him as the crowd do.

Jesus goes on to tell the parable of the three servants. His message is to wait patiently for the reign of God, but work actively. Do not waste what is given, but seek to increase it for the good of the Kingdom. In this way He further emphasizes to the crowd that self-righteousness and self-complacency have no place.

### Conclusions.

There are several reasons why these episodes were recorded.

#### a) Historical reasons.

By this is meant the wish to preserve the historical record of Jesus' actions on earth and the reactions to them. (cf. Lk. 1: 1-4) Luke records, then, the fact that Jesus called two tax-collectors, that He ate with them and that this shocked the Pharisees and others. We have seen how deep and far reaching the implications of these episodes are.

#### b) The Challenge to Social and Religious Conventions.

In calling these men and sharing table-fellowship with them, Jesus challenged the patterns of society at all levels. Religious, moral, national, social and political stances were threatened. He reversed the normal values of both cultural expectation and social behaviour. His contact and communion with sinners was revolutionary.

The morally and ritually unclean could have no contact with the clean in Judaism. (cf. Ex. 20: 15; Ex. 23: 7c; Nah.



1: 2, 3; Prov.17: 15; CD.1: 19) By subverting these distinctions Jesus breached religious etiquette and challenged the social order.(see Mk.7: 14f; Mt.15: 10f) He admitted the public, professional sinner to his table.

It was this action of table-fellowship, not any particular proclamation, that caused the criticism.(Lk.5: 30; 15: 2; 19: 7) It translated his proclamation into action and could not be ignored. Indeed the story of Zacchaeus shows that Jesus' actions were witnessed by a crowd.(v.4) Word and act illuminate one another. "Nothing, in fact, could have dramatized the gratuity of the present realization of God's saving act more effectively than this unheard of initiative towards sinners".(39)

Jesus' declaration in each story that He came to seek and save the lost is easily related to the Gospel tradition. We note the important declaration in Lk.15: 2, a further indication of such episodes in tradition. This can be supported by Matthew 21: 31b, "I tell you this: tax-gatherers and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of Heaven ahead of you." So although there are only two episodes of table-fellowship with sinners in Luke's Gospel, this does not mean that a special effort is needed to relate such to Jesus' proclamation in the rest of the Gospel(s). Indeed there is a close link between these episodes and many of the parables. This will be more closely examined in chapter six of this thesis.

### c) The Proclamation of Forgiveness.

Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God.(cf.Mk.1: 14-15) The Kingdom of God involved divine acceptance and forgiveness. The meals illustrated this in concrete action.

Jesus is seen to claim the authority to accept sinners and offer forgiveness. He offers unconditional forgiveness through Himself. In doing this He sets Himself above the authority of the Pharisees and makes Himself the ultimate power, for only God can forgive sins.(cf.5: 21)

This was the biggest bone of contention in the battle over authority, Jesus' claim that He could forgive sins. This claim is embodied in His table-fellowship with sinners. He forgave sins and celebrated this with those forgiven, amongst those to whom this forgiveness meant the most.(cf.7: 36f) Jesus, a carpenter's son, offered forgiveness, which was the prerogative of God. He did not require repentance using the usual mechanisms. For the Pharisees the only way to God was through the Law; but Jesus in acts and words "dispensed with largesse a righteousness higher than that which the Law had power to bestow".(40)

d) A Model.

Jesus' attitude to the lost serves as a model for His readers.(LK.6: 37f; 22: 26f)

e) A Warning.

The warning is issued against adopting the attitude of the Pharisees.(cf.Lk.12: 1-3; 17: 1-4; 18: 9-14)

f) To Provoke Decision.

In Levi and Zacchaeus we see two sinners wholeheartedly accept Jesus and His message. We see the Pharisees rejecting Jesus, even to the point of His death. Jesus faced people with the need to choose. Neutrality or compromise (cf. Lk.5: 36-39; 14: 24f) were impossible. He either spoke in God's name, offering fellowship and a rejection of established modes of behaviour and concepts, or He spoke in His own right

and was an enemy of God and a blasphemer.(Lk.22: 66-71)  
Through Levi and Zacchaeus, the reader is invited to decide  
on which side he stands.

g) Lukan Motifs.

These two narratives concerning Jesus' table-fellowship  
reveal many Lukan motifs. The traits of Jesus' identity  
and authority are evident. "Who is this who forgives sins?"  
(5: 21, 31; 19: 9) "Who is this who eats with sinners?"  
(Lk.5: 30; 15: 2; 19: 7) The challenge put forward by  
his actions to social and religious norms is important.  
The role of Jesus as host is present, as is the link with  
the meal-table and repentance and fellowship. The meal-  
table also represents the Kingdom in action. Alongside  
these motifs is the ever-present one of misunderstanding.  
As we move on to study the other examples of Lukan table-  
fellowship, we shall be attentive to the reappearance of  
the above motifs.

In conclusion, then, we see the Lukan Jesus not appealing  
to the Pharisees or the zealots, as he might have done, but  
to sinners and outcasts. It is through them that he seeks  
to establish a community to embody God's grace. For such  
were ready to accept Jesus' banquet invitation and could  
go on to be hosts for the Kingdom.

Footnotes. Jesus Eats with Tax Collectors and Sinners.

(1) Obviously any study or enquiry into what was done and said by Jesus in His earthly life is subject to all the questions linked with the quest for the historical Jesus. It is constantly claimed that Gospel writers approached their sources with freedom, or that many events are coloured by post-resurrection experiences or by those of the early church. However, in the case of Jesus' table-fellowship with sinners, the consensus of opinion would seem to be that the essential lineaments of Jesus' actions and words can be recaptured.

(2) See A. Oepke, " γυνή ", T.D.N.T. 1, pp.776-789. The account of Jesus' association with the woman of Lk.7: 36f will be dealt with in chapter 4 of this thesis, as the host at that meal was a Pharisee. See also chapter 5 for the account of Jesus' meal with Mary and Martha. (Lk.10v.38-42)

(3) Discussion of the tight social boundaries and strict etiquette of first century Palestine can be found in chapter 2 of this thesis.

(4) We see the early church in Paul's letters grappling with the problems of the common life of masters and slaves, men and women, parents and children. (Col.3: 18f; Eph.5: 22f; Gal.3: 28; 1 Cor.12: 13; Rom.1: 14) A new unity was to be formed "in Christ".

(5) For further details on taxation see F.C. Grant, The Economic Background of the Gospels, pp.87-91. S. Freyne, Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian, pp.183-207. J. Massyngbaerde Ford, My Enemy is My Guest, pp.65-78.

(6) Later rabbinic evidence shows us that the tax-collector was open to the suspicion he had not tithed properly. (T. Demaj 3: 4) They were also regarded as unfit to be judges or act as witnesses.(Sanhedrin, 25b) Yet condemnation of tax-gatherers was not universal; Baya Mayan, who was charitable to the poor was publicly mourned.(Sanhedrin, 44b; J. Hagga, ii: 2) A favourable report is made concerning Ze'ira (Sanhedrin, 25b) and the story is told of the reclamation of the son of an oppressive tax-gatherer.(Kallah, ed.Coronel, 4b)

(7) We have seen that on a moral basis tax-collectors as a class were regarded as unclean. This also held on a ritual basis. Tax-collectors had contact with Gentiles. The handle of his staff was unclean as it made searches. The question is often debated, in later Rabbinic literature, as to how long a house is unclean when tax-collectors enter it.(Toh.7: 6; T.Toh.7: 6; 8: 5f; Chag.3: 6)

(8) E.E. Ellis, Luke, p.106.

(9) J. Fitzmyer, The Gospel According to Luke, p.587f. discusses this dependency in detail.

(10) ibid, p.588.

- (11) R. Bultmann classifies the first part as a biographical apophthegm, but his comments apply more to Mk.1: 16-20. He regards the second part as a pronouncement story, (History of the Synoptic Tradition, p.28) Vincent Taylor labels it a "Story about Jesus", (Formation of the Gospel Tradition, p.75)
- (12) C. Montefiore. Quoted by N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p.194.
- (13) E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism. Also E.P. Sanders, "Jesus and the Sinners", J.S.N.T. (19) (1983, pp.5-36).
- (14) E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, pp.174-182. Also "Jesus and the Sinners" J.S.N.T. (19) 1983, pp.5-20.
- (15) Jesus and Judaism, p.187.
- (16) ibid, p.178.
- (17) ibid. p.178.
- (18) W. Manson, Gospel of Luke, p.55.
- (19) J. Fitzmyer notes that "the banquet is intended to give a concrete expression of Levi's 'following'", Op.cit. p.591.
- (20) N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, pp.102-108.
- (21) ibid. p.94.
- (22) P. Minear, Commands of Christ, p.180.
- (23) E.P. Sanders, op.cit. p.207.
- (24) F. Godet, A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Vol.1, p.270.
- (25) W. Manson, op.cit. p.55.
- (26) J. Jeremias, N.T. Theology, pp.115-6.
- (27) See chapter 6 of this thesis.
- (28) Some scholars (eg. J.M. Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke, pp.228, R. Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp.34, S.M. Gilmour, Interpreter's Bible, pp.320) consider it to be a later counterpart to the story of Levi. However, this does not account for the details of the Zacchaeus story, the name, the locality, the climbing of the tree. See J. Fitzmyer, op.cit. pp.1219 for discussion as to whether this episode is a unitary composition.
- (29) R. Bultmann, op.cit. pp.33-34 classifies it as a biographical apophthegm. M. Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, pp.51,118 puts it under "paradigm and legend". V. Taylor, op.cit. pp.75-76 considers it as a story about Jesus.

(30) Jericho is often mentioned as one of the places in Palestine where toll stations were located. See O. Michel, "τὰ λῶν νηῶν" T.D.N.T. 8, p.98.

(31) J. Fitzmyer's point, op.cit. p.1223 is "This is a mere physical description of the man; we are not to conclude from the episode that Zacchaeus 'finds real stature' through the welcome extended him by Jesus".

(32) cf. John 1: 47-48.

(33) i.e. It is destined that I do this. See Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.180.

(34) Compare cf. Lk.5: 27-32; 15; Mt.21: 31 etc.

(35) op.cit. p.217.

(36) cf.Lk.5: 30; 7: 34.

(37) See J. Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.1225.

(38) N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p.469.

(39) B.F. Meyer, The Aims of Jesus, p.161.

(40) G. Daly, "Jesus at Table", Furrow (32) Part 9, 1981. p.561.

Chapter 4: Jesus Eats With Pharisees.

"One of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him and He went into the Pharisees' house and took His place at Table." (Lk.7: 36)

In this chapter we intend to study the three meals Jesus ate as a guest of the Pharisees.(Lk.7: 36f; 11: 37f; 14: 1f) However, before we embark on such an examination it is necessary to make some preliminary remarks about the Pharisees.

Scholars increasingly recognize that the picture of the Pharisees presented by the various primary sources is a complex one. Indeed with the primary sources varying as they do, "it is small wonder that opinions about the Pharisees have oscillated over the years, depending on who was employing which source material".(1) The problem is that among ancient sources of information concerning the Pharisees, none is free of tendentiousness of one sort or another - and that includes the source of many popular impressions, the New Testament.

The Old Testament does not mention the Pharisees, but does play a background role for many of the Pharisaic ideas. The intertestamental period provides some evidence, at a period when the Pharisees were emerging.(2) The Hasidim are referred to in Maccabees, but it is unclear whether or not they can be equated with the Pharisees and how they relate to the Essenes. Some scholars do associate the Hasidim with the Pharisees, seeing the Pharisees from the Maccabean revolt on, as a dominant political and religious force in Israel.(3) If this is so, it seems that the character of Pharisaism changed, from being a political force to a group that concentrated more on religious purity.

The works of Josephus also supply us with information concerning the Pharisees. But even Josephus, who declares himself to have

been a Pharisee, has rather different profiles of Pharisaism in his two major works, The Jewish War and Antiquities. In <sup>The</sup> Jewish War (written shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.), the Sadducees are considered to be more significant than the Pharisaic party. In Antiquities, written twenty years later, the Pharisees are pictured as the real voice of Judaism.

Many scholars have also had difficulty in interpreting the rabbinical evidence. Earlier scholars tended to accept uncritically the later rabbinic traditions as accurate descriptions of Pharisaism before 70 C.E. It is now recognised that this is no longer possible, for there was no orthodoxy before 70.

Indeed most of the evidence in written form is much later than 70, and even if traditions go back earlier their transmission has been affected by subsequent developments in post 70 Judaism.

So it seems likely that there was more diversity in first-century Pharisaism than has as yet been acknowledged and that from one period to another the emphasis of the Pharisaic movement changed.(4)

It is the New Testament that provides much of the best known evidence about the Pharisees. Matthew uses the word Pharisee twenty-nine times; Luke twenty-seven; John nineteen and Mark twelve. In addition, Acts has nine references.(5) So almost ninety percent of the references are in the Gospels. The term, almost always, occurs in the plural (Φαρισαῖοι). We also find they are frequently mentioned together with the Sadducees, Herodians, Scribes, and or elders. The word Pharisee is commonly taken to mean separatists,(6), although there are other possibilities.(7)

Bowker (8) draws attention to the discrepancy between Greek and Hebrew sources. The Greek language sources refer to a group known as pharisaioi, the Semitic sources refer to people known



as perushim. The accounts of the pharisaioi and the perushim differ greatly. Hence the question has frequently been raised whether the terms pharisaioi and perushim refer to the same group, or even whether perushim refers to a party at all.

Hence the connection between the pharisaioi and the perushim is much debated. The root of perushim (prsh.) can convey the meaning of "separation". The perushim it would seem were those who separated themselves in some way from the main community.

However, this does not mean they can be taken to be synonymous with the 'Pharisees'.(9)

The New Testament also offers us a complex and inconsistent picture of the Pharisees. In Matthew they receive unflattering treatment. They appear as "vipers" (3: 7; 12: 34; 23: 33), "hypocrites" (23: 23, 27), "blind guides" (23: 16, 24), murderers of the prophets (23: 31), and "whitewashed tombs" (23: 27). However, they are seen to possess some redeeming qualities; they seek baptism (3: 7) and fast (9: 14). Although Matthew presents the most hostile picture of the Pharisees in the Gospels, John and Mark are also critical. The Pharisees are presented as hostile opponents (Jn. 7: 32; 9: 13f; 18: 3; Mark 2: 23f; 3: 6; 8: 11; 12: 13f.) Nevertheless, Nicodemus a Pharisee, seeks a sign (Jn. 3: 1f) and assists in the burial of Jesus (Jn. 19: 39-42).

In Luke the picture is more favourable. His attitude to the Pharisees is complex and not altogether consistent. In addition there is an ambivalence between Luke and Acts. It is not immediately apparent that Luke deals with the Pharisees with enough consistency for us to be able to talk of Luke's view of the Pharisees. There are negative and positive allusions.

Thus, negatively, the Lukan Pharisees rebuke Jesus for

allowing his disciples to pluck corn on the Sabbath (Lk.6: 1-5); they challenge Jesus concerning payment of taxes (Lk.20: 19-26). We are told they "lay in wait for him, to catch something he might say" (Lk.11: 54). We have seen them condemn Jesus as a friend of sinners, as a glutton and a drunkard. Jesus is labelled as a blasphemer (Lk.5: 21) and his authority to forgive sins ridiculed; then the Pharisees seek an opportunity to destroy him (Lk.19: 47). Finally they condemn him to death for blasphemy (Lk.22: 71).

On the positive side, we have three accounts of Jesus sharing table-fellowship with the Pharisees (7: 36f; 11: 37f; 14: 1f). We see the Pharisees marvelling at His words and the authority with which He taught (Lk.4: 22, 36). In Luke 13: 31-33, the Pharisees even warn Jesus of the plots of Herod. Acts also gives a favourable account of Pharisaism; it speaks of Paul's Pharisaism positively. In Acts 5: 34-39, Gamaliel, the Pharisee, argued for tolerance of the Christian sect within Judaism, and in Acts 15 we are told that a number of Pharisees were Christians (see also 19: 39; 23: 6; 23: 9; 26: 5).

We see, then, that even the Gospels themselves do not present a unified view. Luke particularly displays an ambiguous attitude. It would seem that the role of Pharisaism in the Gospels has been exaggerated because of the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism after 70, successor in part to the Pharisaic movement, although by no means synonymous with it. We must remember the Pharisees were the opponents of early Christianity at the time when the evangelists wrote. A current opponent might have loomed larger than any opposition to the Lord during his earthly life.<sup>(10)</sup> This is largely speculation, but it is a point worth considering in this complex issue.

We see then that evaluating the primary sources concerning Pharisaism is a complicated task. Any straightforward view of the Pharisees as a narrow group of bigots is simplistic and misleading. As Samuel Umen wrote, "Jesus cannot be fully appreciated without a full understanding of Pharisaism, and the Pharisaic spirit cannot be grasped by the few uncomplimentary references made against it in the New Testament".(11) As we have seen, not all the references are uncomplimentary, although that is often the impression given. However, Umen is correct in recommending a fuller understanding.

We will briefly consider some of the findings of scholarly research on first-century Pharisaism, for we need to reconstruct an authentic picture of the Pharisees and try to assess their contribution to Judaism. The debate between Sanders and Neusner,(12) discussed earlier illustrates the increasing realisation that the Pharisees represent a complex phenomenon. Neusner's definition of the group is as follows: "a non-political group whose chief religious concerns were for the proper preservation of ritual purity ..... and for the observance of dietary laws".(13)

Certainly we see the gospel writers referring to the Pharisees' observance of laws of purity. We see that they ritually cleansed, not merely washed, vessels used in food preparation or consumption (e.g. Mk.7: 3-4). They excluded "unclean" persons such as tax-collectors, the ill, the handicapped, or the emotionally disturbed from table-fellowship (e.g. Mk.2: 16). They fasted (Mk.2: 18), tithed "mint and rue and every herb" (Lk.11: 42), occupied conspicuous places in the synagogue (Lk.11: 43), and rigorously observed Sabbath Law. Neusner contends that the Pharisees believed the "setting for law observance was the field and the kitchen, the bed and the street".(14) All aspects of

daily life were treated as if they were part of the Temple service. So the Pharisees laid stress on the universal keeping of the law, not only the priests were to observe the Laws of Leviticus, for example. The emphasis was shifted from the Temple in Jerusalem to Jewish homes everywhere. This helped Judaism to survive the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.

However, while Neusner believes that Pharisaism in Jesus' day was apolitical and primarily concerned with ritual, Rivkin (15) takes the opposite view. He takes the view that Pharisaism was revolutionary and concerned with a wide range of issues beyond ritual purity. He maintains that Josephus, rabbinic traditions, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament and the New Testament share a common view. That is that the Pharisees were a dominant political and religious force in Israel (see Phil.3: 5-6; Gal.1: 14; Mt.23: 2; Acts 9: 1-2; Mk.8: 11-13; Acts 23: 8). Certainly Josephus tells us that the Pharisees had other concerns beside ritual purity, "..... the Pharisees, who are considered the most accurate interpreters of the laws, and hold the position of the leading sect ....." (War 2: 162).

Although space does not permit a fuller investigation of their theses here, both scholars are open to criticism. Rivkin appears to rely too heavily on Josephus' description of the Pharisees, tending to force other evidence into Josephus' outline, while Neusner can be criticized for his narrow, reductionistic view of Pharisaism. Yet both theses find support in the New Testament and have valuable contributions to make. Neusner's studies reveal how important the cultic aspect of Pharisaism was, while Rivkin attests how influential Pharisaism was among the masses (see Antiquities 18: 15).

It would appear that there was a complex relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees. There were differences and points of agreement. Indeed Reumann suggests, "quarrels with the Pharisees may have come just because they and Jesus were so close on many points ..... traditional portraits of the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees as one of sheer hostility are wide of the mark".(16) It may well be that the relationship of his teaching to theirs is closer than the gospels in their present form would lead us to believe. Certainly Jesus shares the Pharisaic aim of promoting personal righteousness before God, and He accepts the doctrine of resurrection which the Pharisees at this time were so anxious to promote.(17) Again Jesus is well-versed in the Scriptures and can deal with legal matters. The use of gospel form criticism alongside form criticism by Neusner should aid our understanding of the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees.

Nevertheless, although there seems to be much agreement between Jesus and the Pharisees, there is a difference of emphasis.

Jesus tends to emphasise the ethical as compared with the ritual emphasis of the Pharisees. Jesus preaches the Kingdom and its piercing moral challenge, while also practising a compassionate ministry which frequently involves him setting aside a strict application of the law.

Jesus is often depicted in the gospels in scholarly controversy and exegetical debate with the Pharisees. They appear to enjoy embarrassing him with testing questions (see Luke 20: 20-6; Mk.12: 13-17; Mt.22: 16-22). There seems to be little doubt that the Pharisees disliked Jesus' nonconformity. Jesus is pictured as believing the whole matter of external cleanness trivial compared with moral cleanness.

However, the Pharisees were motivated by a zeal for Judaism and intended to meet and respond to real religious needs. They had a genuine religious concern, but were no doubt no less liable than any other group to fall into the pitfalls of turning their piety into a rigorous system. If their beliefs led to the undesirable consequences mentioned in Mt.2: 23-24 (cf.Lk. 11: 37-54) this was a consequence, not an intention of the Pharisaic ideals.

The Pharisees intended to facilitate people's access to God.

They recognised that holiness should be as much part of everyday life as it was of the Sabbath and of the Temple ritual. It was the only renewal movement within Judaism which was not involved in an eccentric form of living. Obviously the "system" had vast societal repercussions, for the Pharisees remained in society and played an influential role.

Josephus tells us that the Pharisees lived simply, avoided any pretence of luxury and because of their strict observance of purity laws, were "extremely influential among the townsfolk, and all prayers and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their exposition" (Jewish Antiquities 18: 15). No doubt the Pharisees were concerned about the influence of Jesus on the mass of the people. For although the opposition of Jesus to the Pharisees may very well have been exaggerated in the development of the gospel tradition, it would seem to be based on fact. We must not minimize the inevitable clash between the Pharisees and Jesus, who was not prepared to accept their view of what the holiness of God demanded.

What did the Pharisees particularly object to? In the first place Jesus and his disciples were frequently accused of not maintaining the standards of religious behaviour the Pharisees

saw as part of the law (e.g. Mk. 2: 18; 2: 23-28; 7: 2; 7: 14-23). However, many people did not follow Pharisaic practice. Harvey's (18) argument is that Jesus' work and message were close enough to those of the Pharisees for similar expectations to be aroused. I doubt, though, whether this argument is strong enough to account for the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. (19)

A second point of disagreement is that the Pharisees belonged to a fellowship which helped preserve their standards of ritual purity. These haberim (20) severely limited their social contact with other Jews who did not keep the commandments so strictly. However, Jesus associated with notorious sinners (see Mt. 11: 19; Lk. 5: 29-30; 7: 34; 15: 2; 19: 7). He even claimed that these sinners would precede the righteous in the Kingdom (Mt. 21: 31). So He not only associated with them, but claimed to speak for God. (21) As Hengel writes, Jesus appears as a "prophetic figure empowered to authorise even serious dispensations from the demands of law and custom". (22)

Sanders emphasises the view that the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was not about purity laws or His association with sinners, but about His claim to be able to offer forgiveness with the authority of God. His message was that "the wicked who heeded Him would be included in the Kingdom even though they did not repent as it was universally understood ..... that is, even though they did not make restitution, sacrifice, and turn in obedience to the law". (23) In the eyes of the Pharisees this was Jesus' offence, for he downgraded the normal machinery of righteousness. As we have already argued, this view of Sanders does make good sense of the evidence. But how then were Jesus and the Pharisees able to share table-fellowship? It is to the three accounts of such fellowship found in Luke's Gospel that

we now turn.

1) The House of Simon the Pharisee (Lk.7: 36f)

The underlying question which pervades this narrative is, Who is this man?(v49) In the preceding section (v33-34) we see that Jesus does not behave like John the Baptist (v33); in fact he is an eater, drinker, glutton and drunkard (v34). Who is this man who eats with the Pharisee, Simon? Does he have a demon?(v33) He is a friend of tax collectors and sinners! Who is He who allows such attentions from a woman?(v37-38) Simon thinks of Him as a prophet (v39) and calls Him teacher (v40) Who is this, who even forgives sins?(v49) The question of Jesus' identity is, then, of paramount importance.

Jesus accepts the Pharisees' invitation to dine. He is depicted treating them in the same way that he would tax-collectors and sinners (5: 27f; 19: 1f). His interest is not only in marginal people, He is also concerned for the more respectable members of society.

So the "friend of sinners" (v34b) sits down at table with the guardians of purity. No motive for the invitation is assigned. The Pharisees have heard of Jesus (v39), and may wish to honour an important person. Jeremias (24) regards it as a Sabbath-meal, to which Jesus would have been invited after preaching in the synagogue; if so, Luke does not tell us this.

Some commentators feel there are two separate traditions present here. Leaney (25) would take the story about the woman and the criticism of Simon (v.37-40; 44-47) as one tradition, and the conversation of v.44-48; 40-43; 50 as the second, whereas Ellis (26) sees the supper and the anointing as two separate stories. From a form-critical perspective, the tradition is made up of a



pronouncement-story (v.36-40, 44-47) and a parable (41-43).

Further evidence for the conflation is seen when the passage is compared with the anointing of Jesus in Bethany(27) (Mk.14: 3-9; Mt.26: 6-13; Jn.12: 1-8). However, we have no reason to suppose that Luke conflated these elements, and we propose to examine the story as an entity, as Luke passed it on to us.

Marshall (28) comments that the section (v.36f) starts with an unusual order of words. We can compare this with the other

'Pharisaic meals' recorded in Luke

Ἡρώτα δέ τις αὐτόν τῶν Φαρισαίων ἵνα φάγη μετ' αὐτοῦ.  
(Lk.7:36.)

Ἐρωτᾷ αὐτόν Φαρισαῖος ὅπως ἀριστήσῃ παρ' αὐτῷ. (Lk. 11:37.)

εἰς οἶκόν τινος τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν Φαρισαίων σαββάτῳ  
φαγεῖν ἄρτον. (Lk.14:11).

Perhaps, as Marshall points out, the order of words in Lk.7: 36 stress or indicate an unusual invitation.

The woman, a sinner of the city, was probably a harlot or prostitute. She is referred to as ἄμαρτωλός, someone who was notoriously bad. It would seem that she herself was the sinner, prostitute or adulteress, and that she was not just the wife of such a man. (In Jn.12: 3 she is Mary). And although the Gentiles were regarded by the Jews as ἄμαρτωλοί (Lk.6: 32, 33; 24: 7), the term means more than that in the present context. Jesus has been introduced as a "friend of sinners" (v.34), and we have seen him befriend such in Lk.5.

The woman's entrance into the house causes no particular comment. It was not uncommon for people to enter during the course of a meal. Nevertheless, this woman was no onlooker, or even a beggar for alms. Her character was well-known, she was the "town harlot", and for a woman of her standing to enter the home of a Pharisee was seen to be both daring and objectionable. She was perhaps encouraged by Jesus' reputation as "a friend of sinners" (7: 34; 5: 30f).

However, she does not make a discreet entry! (v.38)

The cause of her tears is not expressed, but to kiss a person's feet was a sign of deep reverence and gratitude. To anoint the feet seems to be an unparalleled reaction, although it reminds us of the anointing of Kings. It should also be remembered that Jesus was reclining at table. She spares no lavishness and accords Jesus marks of honour. But it was unacceptable for a woman to display her hair in public. Her passionate desire to pay honour to Jesus exceeded all measure and defied convention.

If her entrance had caused no comment, her actions and Jesus' response thereafter certainly did! The question of Jesus' identity immediately comes to the fore (v.39). Simon thinks that if Jesus were really a prophet he would know this woman's reputation. Jesus, though, not only knows of the woman's character, He knows Simon's inner thoughts (v.40). Here we are reminded of the condemnation of Levi (Lk.5) and Zacchaeus (Lk.19). Their opponents too were quick to point out their sin.

In this story Luke brings out into the open questions regarding the social repercussions of the purity laws. Jesus, in allowing the woman to touch him, defiles himself. The Pharisees' lifestyle was concerned to protect themselves from defilement. Their views on defilement affected a whole social system. As Mary Douglas writes: "Defilement is never an isolated event. It cannot occur except in view of a systematic ordering of ideas...."(29). For pollution ideas only make sense in reference to a total structure of thought where there are boundaries, margins and rituals of separation. The Pharisees' purity regulations affected the ethical values of community life in a collective conscience. For society in the first century did not consider individualism a pivotal value, as we do (cf. Jn.1: 46) The community demonstrated a common

conscience or "crowd mind".(30)

Jesus in his actions challenged the basis of the Pharisees' views and struck at the ordering of society life. Religious and social obligation were strongly linked in first century Palestine. For religion constituted not only a social event in the life of an individual, but also corporate responsibility. The Pharisees realised that Jesus in breaking one rule was involved in an attack on the whole system of rules and rituals in the Pharisaic community.

Jesus does seek to justify his action in a parable. The parable is directed to a Pharisee, as are many Lukan parables (e.g. Lk.14: 15f; Lk.15) It is interesting to note that Jesus is still referred to as "teacher" (v.40). This may be said ironically or, perhaps the Pharisees recognized a peer, as well as a rival. Jesus tells the parable of the two debtors. The woman, labelled a sinner, now takes on a different guise. She is forgiven and hence loves Christ the more. Her gratitude and love towards Christ are in proportion to the sins she has had forgiven. Love is not the ground of her forgiveness, but rather its proof or result.

It now becomes clear that Simon neglected to supply his guest with the usual courtesies (v.45-46). It is precisely these that the woman supplies (v.44-47). In the Lukan form, the conduct of the Pharisee is strange and it is this omission on behalf of Simon that raises doubts as to the unity of the passage.(31) Geldenhuys supplies an explanation, "What is more natural than that one of the Pharisees who was critical and antagonistic towards Christ should nevertheless invite Him for the purpose of tripping Him up ....."(32). Or perhaps Simon, fearing that his fellow Pharisees would object to him fraternising with Jesus, received Him coldly and discourteously. The above may contain an explanation, indeed we have no reason

to suppose that Christ only accepted invitations from those well-disposed towards him.

However, Simon's actions and the fact He still refers to the woman as a sinner (v.39) provide Jesus with an occasion to explain the gratitude a forgiven sinner feels. Simon has not experienced this reality. Jesus is able to contrast Simon's and the woman's attitude towards Him (v.44-46). It would seem that Jesus intends not to rebuke Simon as such, but rather to explain the Kingdom to him.

For Luke has divested the story of its connection with the passion narrative (cf. Mk.14: 3-9; Mt.26: 6-13; Jn.12: 1-8). In the episode we see Jesus defending a sinner against the criticism of a Pharisee and explaining the forgiveness of sins by God. Jesus is portrayed as the "agent of declaration of God's forgiveness for sinful humanity".(33)

We also see the contrast between Jesus' attitude to the woman and that of the Pharisee. The woman is still a sinner in the eyes of the Pharisees, presumably because she has not repented using the normal channels of repentance. This again brings the identity of Jesus to the fore, and the attendant misunderstanding of who he is. The guests at table pose the question, "Who is this who can forgive sins?" (v.49). He is more than a prophet or teacher, for in forgiving her sins, "He lends His authority to rehabilitate her with society".(34) She is offered salvation and peace (v.50)

(35) (These questions foreshadow the question to be asked by Herod, Lk.9: 7-9).

## 2. The Pharisees and Lawyers Denounced. Lk.11: 37-54.

While Jesus was speaking or teaching, He was invited by a Pharisee to dine. Luke does not state whether the Pharisee had marvelled at the message or whether he sought to trap Christ.

The only clue to the possible Pharisaic attitude comes in v.15-19, when Jesus' healing power is attributed to Beel'zebul.

Nevertheless, an invitation is issued and accepted.

Jesus accepts the invitation to dine, but pays no attention to the custom of washing before the meal - something that His host would consider important.(cf.Lk.7: 36f) Unlike the episode in Lk.7, it is Jesus who makes inadequate preparation, not the Pharisee who fails to provide for his guest. We are told that the Pharisee was astonished.(v.38 ἐθαύμασεν cf.Mk.7: 1-3)

Ceremonial handwashing was customary among the Pharisees, but this rite was based on the unwritten traditions, so Jesus could disregard this regulation without ignoring the Law.(36) However, the Pharisees would regard this as a grave omission. For fundamental to their work and understanding of Torah was the principle that the Torah's meaning was not always clear and therefore the oral tradition was needed. Once the oral tradition had been given that was then operative, even normative. Not to take notice of the oral transmission was transgression. For it made what was implicit in the Torah now explicit.

The Pharisees, then, lay great stress on purification before meals (Mt.15: 1-3; Mk.7: 2-4), indeed, unwashed hands were equal to the sin of impurity. It would seem that Ellis and Geldenhuys (37) interpret the action of Jesus correctly. Both see His omission as purposeful and calculated. He knew the Pharisees paid too much attention to outward formalities. He set the stage for an opportunity to discuss the question of what really makes a man religiously clean.

The host and his guests must have been scandalised at the neglect of this rite. We are not told that Jesus knew the inner thoughts of the Pharisee, but he is apparently portrayed as doing

so.(Lk.7: 39) The implication would seem to be that Jesus saw the inward defilement and contrasted it with the outward punctiliousness of Pharisaic purification.(cf.Matthew 23; Mk.12).

The Pharisees are denounced by Luke as "full of wickedness and extortion".(v.39) This may be a description used by the Pharisees when referring to the tax-collectors. For in Lk.5: 29f; 19: 8f. the Pharisees were quick to denounce the sin in others. They "neglect justice and the love of God"(v.42); they are like unmarked graves (v.44. cf.Mt.23:27) on which men stumble. The Pharisees would be scandalised by such a description. Graves were objects of defilement and uncleanness, all of which the Pharisees sought to avoid.(see Num.19: 11-22; Lev.21: 1-4, 11) So we see those who wished for the greatest purity likened to objects of defilement. They are outwardly elegant and calm, but full of decaying matter inside. As they are unmarked they are not recognised for what they are.

Although they are defiled they wish others to emulate them! v.43 talks of their pride in the synagogues (cf.14: 7; cf.20: 45f) they want the best seats and to receive reverential greetings in the market place. The reader is reminded of the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector.(Lk.18: 9-14) Their separation and distinction result only in self-assertion, self-complacency and pride. They observe only outward forms of religion, but long for the praise of men.

So Luke points out the neglect of the fundamental obligation imposed by the law, a pure heart.(cf.Mk.7: 14; Ps.51: 17; Ps.24; Micah 6: 8) They should make purity of heart their aim.(Ps.73: 1; Mt.5: 8). They have clean cups and dishes, but no moral purity.(v.39, 42, 44)

In the next section it is the lawyers who are denounced (v.45-52)

They are criticized because of the innumerable regulations they have laid on the people.(v.46)(38) In Lk.11: 46 we are told that they do not lift a finger to help the masses in their struggles. They gave heavy burdens, but they never loosed one. They are then judged by their own traditions. Statues were forbidden, yet they built memorials and tombs for dead prophets.(v.47) Indeed they still wish to kill the living prophets.(v.47)(39) But the ultimate failure was that instead of opening up the Scriptures they have closed them.(v.52) By laying the emphasis on the wrong things they have obscured the will of God.(cf.Lk.7: 29-30)

It appears that the Pharisees have misunderstood the meaning of purity, while the lawyers have obscured the Scriptures. This denouncement we are told was public, in front of "so many thousands or a multitude".(12: 1) Hence the Pharisees are angry (Lk.11: 53-54).

This section (Lk.11: 37-54) begs several questions. Many commentators (eg. Fitzmeyer) think it is unlikely that Jesus himself uttered such comments against these leaders, especially when invited to dinner. The dinner setting is a Lukan one (see Mt.23), but the content of the sayings does appear in the other synoptics. It may be that these comments reflect rather the attitude to the Pharisees at the time Luke wrote, rather than during Jesus' earthly ministry. T. W. Manson offers a further explanation, that the woes are "no polemic against Pharisaism as a system".(40) Rather they should be read as they are presented by Luke, keeping out of mind the overtones of Matthew. They are a condemnation of bad Pharisees, such as was made by Pharisees themselves.

But how does this episode fit in to what we know of Jesus, His ministry and His relationship with the Pharisees? We have seen that Jesus and His disciples do not always behave in a way

the Pharisees approved of (see Lk. 6: 1-5; 20: 19-26; 5: 30; 7: 34; 19: 7; Mk.7: 3-4; Mk.2: 16-18; etc.). The Pharisees disliked Jesus' nonconformity and tested him with questions (Lk. 20: 20-26; Mk. 12: 13-17; Mt. 22: 16-22. See also Lk. 5: 21; Lk. 19: 47; Lk. 22: 71). We have also seen that Jesus ate with tax-collectors and sinners and often disregarded Pharisaic purity laws (Lk. 5: 30; 7: 34; 15: 2; 19: 17; Mt. 11: 19 etc.).

Neusner has emphasised the importance of purity rituals to the Pharisees, and we see Jesus in the Gospels not adopting this precise relationship to the Law. Questions concerning Jesus' attitude to the law are raised. Did he set aside the law for the sake of his compassionate ministry? It seems rather that he recalls the Pharisees and others to its fundamental principles (see Lk. 11: 39-44).

We see throughout the Gospel of Luke that Jesus addresses parables to the Pharisees (e.g. 14: 7f; Is. 1f; 18: 9-14). He does this in order to explain the nature of God, not in order to criticize. It would seem that the woes of Lk. 11: 37f. come into a similar category. Jesus is seen by the continual use of  $\epsilon\upsilon\chi\acute{\alpha}\iota$  to be genuinely concerned for them. For this word indicates not merely anger, but pity.

It seems then that the differences of opinion between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning purity, ritual and Law in Lk.11 can be backed up by similar instances elsewhere in the Gospels. Similarly, Jesus' concern to explain to the Pharisees a fuller understanding of the Kingdom and rouse them is well documented elsewhere. As we demonstrated in our introduction there were many similarities between Jesus and the Pharisees and no doubt Jesus understood the zeal for Judaism that underlay the Pharisaic movement.

But why does Luke give this dispute a meal setting? We have



seen that the Pharisees formed haberim in order to recognise the holiness of God in all areas of life. The purity rules of the haberim particularly referred to the dietary laws of the meal. Indeed the Pharisees strictly adhered to the core symbols of purity centring around table-fellowship.(41) This explains why several of Jesus' disputes with the Pharisees occur in the context of meals (Mk. 7: 1-2; Lk. 7: 36; Lk. 11: 37-40; Lk. 14: 1-14). Jesus did not regard meticulous observance of these rules as an essential part of religious response to God.

In conclusion we see that Lk. 11: 37f can be fitted into the portrayal of Jesus and His ministry quite easily. The section ends with hostility on the part of the Pharisees (v.53-54); this too is mirrored elsewhere (Lk. 5: 21; 19: 47; 22: 71).

### 3. The Excluded Guests. Lk.14: 1-24.

The third Pharisaic meal takes place on the Sabbath. The meal probably took place in Jerusalem; the ἀρχόντων seems to indicate this. Sabbath day banquets were common, and proverbial for luxury. Jesus may again (see Lk.7: 36f) have taught in the synagogue, for it was customary to invite the preacher to dine. It is unclear what the Pharisees' attitude was, for if the episode is taken to come in sequence with Lk.13: 31 the Pharisees' attitude seems favourable. But we are told "the Pharisees were watching him" (14: 1). Nothing particularly demonstrates that the events follow on. Chapter 14 begins with καὶ ἐγένετο and seems to be a separate episode.

To invite Jesus to a meal provided the opportunity to observe Jesus closely (vi). It is not unlikely that the dropsical man was introduced as a trap set by the Pharisees, to test Jesus. Jesus disarms His critics with the question of v.3, "is it lawful to

heal on the Sabbath, or not?". The Pharisees do not reply,(v4) for they are trapped. For if an ox or son fell into a well could it be pulled out on the Sabbath?(v5) Some would argue, only if death would result from failure to act.

Jesus was no doubt aware of the countless interpretations the Pharisees gave to the Sabbath-day law. Many of these interpretations indicated action to save the ox(v5) in the case of financial loss, although it is not clear that the strict Jew would rescue an animal. Jesus makes the argument turn not on a legal scruple (Mk.2: 27), but on the dictates of human feeling (v6), thus exposing the Pharisees' hypocrisy and lack of concern.

In order to explain this further Jesus tells a parable (v7-14), for we are told that Jesus had noted how the guests chose the places of honour (πρωτοκλισίας) and He explains the error in this (cf.lk.11:43) The setting of the parable is formal, a wedding or banquet. The concern of the parable is not etiquette or good manners, but humility. The attitude of both guests and host is commented on. The Pharisees are anxious to fulfil the formal obligations of etiquette, but Christ points out that it is the humble who shall be exalted (14: 11,14). The displaced guest moves from the top place to the bottom one. It is with shame that the guest moves, whereas if a guest is moved to a higher place by the host he has received a great honour (14: 13, 21, 23). The Pharisees will be shamed, for they choose the best seats in the synagogues (cf.Lk.11: 43) and at banquets (Lk.14: 7), and they require reverential greetings in the market place (Lk.11: 43). However, the tax-collectors and sinners will be exalted (Lk.14: 11, 14; cf.Mt.5: 1f; 21; 31. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican also illustrates this principle (Lk.18: 1-8), as does that of Lazarus (Lk.16: 19-31).

The section introduces these sayings as a parable (v7); this gives us a clue to their interpretation. For the proper behaviour at a feast affords an analogy to the attitude demanded by the Kingdom of God. The attitude of the Christian disciple should be humility, not status seeking (cf. Jn.13).

Humility is also a motive for hospitality (v.12-14). A return must not be expected from the guests, but from God himself. These verses fit in with the general Lukan concern for the poor and marginals (see Lk.7: 11f; 8: 2-3; 8: 43f; 18: 35f). Jesus' words show the reversal of human values which so much of His preaching demands, a reversal of role, condition and status. It is with the marginals of v.12-14 that Christ mixes, and this the Pharisees murmur about (see Lk.5: 29f; 15: 1f; 19: 8f).

For Jesus in Luke is seen in His actions and parables to be concerned with the outcasts of society. He spends time with those who are labelled sinners and unclean. His social sphere and concern is in marked contrast to the habirim of the Pharisees. But it is the man who gives a feast for the poor who will be rewarded at the resurrection (14: 14), and he shall eat in the Kingdom (14: 15).

Jesus then tells another parable that looks forward to God's heavenly banquet (14: 16f). Jesus, labelled glutton (Lk.7: 34), pictures the inauguration of the Kingdom in terms of a banquet. Jesus' own association of these ideas makes the meal an important motif in Luke.(42) Indeed his actions in the Lukan meal and his parables are clearly associated. The meal is an important symbolic action.

The host in the parable sends out numerous invitations. It is not difficult to equate Christ with the servant. The guests are issued with one invitation only; to require repeated invitations was seen in Jerusalem as an attempt to manifest one's status in society.

It asserted the guest's importance (v16), but Jesus issues only one invitation. Excuses are made on the actual day of the supper (43) (v18-20), although the supper is now ready (v17). It is a great discourtesy to refuse the invitation, when the guests have had forewarning (v16) and the meal is ready (v17. cf. Romans 11).

The story is a picture of salvation, where the stress is on the readiness of the host to fill the table (v21, 23-24) and not on the refusal of the guests. The master is angry (ὀργισθεῖς cf. Lk. 3: 7; 21: 23) and fills the table with those who did not expect an invitation. The warning of the parables is clearly to accept the invitation now, while it is issued for the places will be filled (14: 24).

The parable is a further interpretation of the Lukan Jesus' own behaviour in eating with tax-collectors and sinners, in healing the maimed and forgiving the prostitutes. It points towards a universal offer of the Gospel. It also contrasts the attitude of Jesus and the Pharisees towards the marginals of society. Jesus wishes to forgive, heal and restore the lost and fallen. There is again an implicit attack on the divisions within society. The internal and external boundaries of the community are challenged. The hierarchical nature of society is replaced with simplicity and humility. The expected norm is knocked down. God in these parables is not restricted to "such times and places as are protected from the profane by careful regulations and rituals".(44)

The Pharisees realised that Jesus had a radical new way of understanding God, "For Jesus the model of the disciple is the child, the publican as opposed to the Pharisee, the man who loses his life, the poor, the forgiven sinner, sitting at table with Him."(45) By His actions and teaching Jesus revolutionised the concept of sacred and secular. He did not deny the boundary between the two, but taught

that God was not limited by it. "He is removing the distinction .... between the realm of the sacred and the secular and it is for this reason that He is able to consort with sinners".(46)

Jesus then was radical in His attitude. Sanders(47) realises this in his thesis that Jesus offered unconditional forgiveness to those who did not repent, as it was universally understood. These aspects of Jesus' message meant that "He displayed an egocentricity which must have struck many of His contemporaries as impious".(48) Both His message, His actions and His challenge to the normal piety, and hence the social system, would have been very offensive. He was claiming to speak for God, about who could be forgiven and accepted in the Kingdom. This was considered blasphemous.(see Mk.14: 64)

The dinner party of 14: 1f is used by Jesus to expose the shortcomings of the Pharisees. The Pharisees genuinely thought that they knew how to interpret the Scripture. Here Jesus lays bare their objections to Sabbath-day healings. He exhorts them to change their ways by telling them two parables which point out that God requires humility and lowliness. He warns them that they are in danger of missing God's invitation to the banquet. Indeed they are in danger of being replaced.(cf.Lk.15: 1-32)

### Conclusions.

It is our contention that Luke recorded these meals with Pharisees for a purpose; either to show an aspect of Jesus and His ministry or to teach his readers something. They are more than mere settings. Luke's theological purpose is related to these meals. Jesus' use of the meal or banquet motif in many parables supports this hypothesis.

#### 1. An occasion for teaching.

Each meal was an occasion for important teaching. The teaching

springs from the etiquette connected with the meal or with the Sabbath.

Jesus hopes to influence his hosts for good through His teaching, which is often in the form of parables.(49) The Pharisees' values and thinking are placed under scrutiny. They are taught about love, forgiveness and humility. An invitation to the Kingdom is issued to them. It is by this teaching and His actions that Jesus tells the Pharisees about the love of God and His character.

## 2. His identity.

Jesus is more than a friend of sinners; He does not just come eating and drinking; He is more than a prophet or teacher; He can forgive sins and decide who enters the Kingdom. Jesus challenges their view of God and forgiveness. God calls not for clean cups and plates, but a pure heart and to be a friend of the humble. The love of sinners is worth more than clean platters.

For God is a loving Father (cf.Lk.15). Jesus takes the opportunity of table-fellowship to preach and demonstrate the essence of the Gospel to them. He challenges them to move on with God.

If the Pharisees invited Jesus to dine in order to trick Him or catch Him out, they have the tables turned on them. They are shown to be wanting by Christ. In their complacency they fail in all they claim to be and even lead others to stumble over them.

## 3. A Warning.

So Luke's reader is left with a decision, to react like the Pharisees or like the tax-collectors. They accept the challenge to further faith or not. To answer the question personally, "Who is this?" The reader is warned also to take stock of his actual situation, to see how he stands and to take action, now.

4. A Contrast.

The contrast between these meals and those examined in chapter three is clear. When Jesus ate with tax-collectors and sinners the atmosphere was one of joy and celebration. The marginals were grateful for acceptance and inclusion.

We see in Jesus' meals with the Pharisees an undercurrent of hostility, plotting and jealousy. They respond with hostility, not happiness. Hence they are in danger of missing out on the invitation of the bridegroom to celebrate at the wedding banquet.

5. Society.

We also have some sociological insights. Although the Pharisees and Jesus are in dispute over a number of issues, Jesus is regarded as an acceptable table companion. The meal is mentioned as it has an important social role and bears a meaning in that particular social system. The Pharisees lived according to the pattern of their society. Their values can only be judged to be noble or ignoble in line with cues shared by the community in first century Palestine.

Jesus proposed social change and therefore challenged the equilibrium. "Changes in one institution lead to changes in another, so if you wanted to start a revolution, you could do so by changing any one of the smaller social systems".(50)

Jesus not only initiates social change, but He symbolizes (51) it with his table-fellowship with sinners. And he continues the guest-host motif and teaches the implications of this in these episodes regarding Pharisees. His meals are an essential part of the context of His teaching and cannot be separated from it.(52) In these meals Luke recognises the importance of the encounter between mother and daughter religions.

Footnotes. Jesus Eats with Pharisees.

- (1) J. Reumann, Introduction to Introduction to Pharisaism by W.D. Davics, pp.x. See also A.F.J. Klijn, "Scribes, Pharisees, Highpriests and Elders in the New Testament". Novum Testamentum (3) 1959, pp.259-67.
- (2) The Psalms of Solomon and the Assumption of Moses are cited by some scholars as giving voice to hopes cherished within Pharisaic circles. However, it is doubtful if either of these does emanate from Pharisees. Cf.eg. the introductions, respectively, in the Charlesworth Pseudepigrapha.
- (3) See E. Rivkin, A Hidden Revolution. Also Calvin J. Roetzel, The World that Shaped the New Testament. J.E. Stambaugh and D.L. Balch, The New Testament in its Social Environment.
- (4) As already stated the early political involvement of the sect gave way in the first century to a form of piety defined by, e.g. tithing, fasting, Sabbath observance etc.
- (5) Phil. 3: 5 is the only other occurrence.
- (6) This raises the question whether separatists is a negative or positive designation.
- (7) See A. Baumgarten, "The Name of the Pharisees", J.B.L. (102) 1983, pp.411-28.
- (8) See J. Bowker, Jesus and the Pharisees, p.2.
- (9) J. Bowker, op.cit., p.4f.
- (10) For further discussion see A.É. Harvey, Jesus and the Constraints of History, p.49f. E.P. Sanders, "Jesus and the Constraint of Law", J.S.N.T. (17) 1983, pp.19-24. J.Reumann, op.cit.
- (11) S. Umen, Pharisaism and Jesus,
- (12) See chapters 1 and 3 or this thesis.
- (13) J. Neusner, Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70 III, pp.304-5.
- (14) J. Neusner, From Politics to Piety, p.89.
- (15) See E. Rivkin, op.cit.
- (16) op.cit. pp.xix.



- (17) Both favoured the synagogues, both taught the value of making proselytes and of prayer.
- (18) op.cit. pp.50-52.
- (19) See E.P. Sanders, op.cit. pp.22-23. Also E.P. Sanders Jesus and Judaism, pp.192-199.
- (20) See chapter 2 of this thesis.  
See also J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, pp.247f.
- (21) E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, doubts this point.  
See p.270f.
- (22) M. Hengel, The Charismatic Leader and His Followers, p.61.
- (23) E.P. Sanders, op.cit. p.207. See chapter 3 of this thesis for further discussion of Sander's view.
- (24) J. Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, pp.44-46.
- (25) A.R.C. Leaney, The Gospel According to St. Luke, p.146.
- (26) E. Ellis, The Gospel of Luke, p.123.
- (27) For a concise comparison of these passages see J.A. Fitzmyer, The Gospel of Luke, p.684.
- (28) I.H. Marshall, Luke, p.308.
- (29) M. Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, p.41.
- (30) ibid. p.16.
- (31) See J.M. Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke, p.111.  
J.A. Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.685.
- (32) N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p.235.
- (33) J.A. Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.688.
- (34) A. Plummer, Gospel According to St. Luke, p.214.
- (35) The woman is told to go in peace (v.50) cf. Jn.8: 11. Both are saved.
- (36) See Mk.7: 1-5; cf. Gen.18: 4; Judg.19: 21; Josephus, War 2: 18,5.  
The Pharisees attitude to such observances can perhaps be gauged from the later Mishna. "It is more serious to offend against the decrees of the Scribes than against the decrees of the Law".(M.Sanh.XI.13)
- (37) E. Ellis, op.cit. pp.168-169.  
N. Geldenhuys, op.cit. p.341.

(38) See the later M. Sanh 11: 3 "they load men with irksome burdens".

(39) The Lukan Jesus here assumes the solidarity of the nation in rejecting God's messengers.

(40) T.W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, p.99.

(41) "Of the 341 individual Houses (of Shammai and Hillel ) legal pericopae, no fewer than 229 ..... approximately 67 per cent of the whole, directly or indirectly concern table-fellowship". J. Neusner, From Politics to Piety, p.86.

(42) See E.C. Davis, The Significance of the Shared Meal in Luke-Acts.

(43) For further details see chapter 6: Parables, of this thesis.

(44) J. Riches, Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism, p.141.

(45) ibid. p.140.

(46) E. Käsemann, Essays on New Testament Themes, p.39.

(47) See E.P. Sanders, op.cit.

(48) ibid. p.271.

(49) See chapter 6 of this thesis.

(50) B.J. Malina, The New Testament World, p.19.

(51) See Y. Talmon, "Pursuit of the Millenium: The Relation between Religious and Social Change" in Reader in Comparative Religion, pp.522-37.

(52) This is illustrated by the theme of many of the Lukan parables.

Chapter 5. Jesus Eats with Disciples and Followers.

Luke records five instances when Jesus ate with His disciples or followers, namely:-

- a) The Feeding of the 5,000 (9: 16f)
- b) At the Home of Mary and Martha (10: 39f)
- c) The Last Supper (22: 14f)
- d) The Meal at Emmaus (24: 30f)
- e) The Eating of the Fish (24: 41-43)

Given the importance attached to the meal in Judaism and the Mediterranean world,(1) it comes as no surprise that meals were significant in the life of Jesus and His followers.

However, by first century Jewish standards,(2) Jesus' followers were not a natural or homogeneous grouping. Within the sociology of first century Palestine Jesus' core group of Twelve would be hard to classify. As Koenig explains, "While the community surrounding Jesus was not exactly a band of beggars, neither was it a collection of travelling scholars who could expect gracious receptions in the households of the pious. In short, Jesus and His disciples must have confused their Galilean contemporaries".(3)

These five meal episodes also illustrate the wider spectrum of Jesus' following. Not only were there the Twelve, but also Mary and Martha, the householder where the Last Supper was held, and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke also mentions other believers in his Gospel, for example the women (Lk.8: 2-3), the seventy-two (Lk.10: 1-12) and Joseph of Arimathea (Lk.23: 50-51)

There are many issues involved in an examination of these passages. As we have already mentioned, it is not unusual for a eucharistic interpretation to be put, even

thrust, on the Gospel Meals in their entirety. We have contended that eucharistic labels have been too easily or casually applied.(4) It is often assumed that all Gospel Meals must have strong eucharistic overtones. Such a view takes no account of the role of the meal in the households of the time, and further takes no regard of the many communal meals celebrated at that time. The meal as an eschatological symbol is also an important biblical motif.

All these facts are pertinent to any discussion of the meals recorded in the Gospel. However, the meals, particularly those with followers, are related linguistically and in other ways to the Last Supper. We wish to re-examine the importance and significance of this relationship. That is not to say that eucharistic interpretations of relationships between such meals and the Last Supper are valueless. That would be to err in the opposite direction. We propose to consider the evidence from both sides.

The meals Jesus ate with believers are distinctive. They may even be seen as a culmination of the meals Jesus ate with outcasts, sinners, tax-collectors and Pharisees. An examination of all the Lukan meals in the light of the Last Supper should reveal these meals as especially important. For if the eucharistic interpretation is such a valuable one, these particular meals should bring out its values. It may be that the feeding of the 5,000, the meal with Mary and Martha and possibly the resurrection meals, are the only ones strongly linked with the Last Supper. Alternatively, it may be that the Last Supper is the culmination of all the Lukan meals.

Obviously an important consideration is how far the

influence of early church practices led to a eucharistic interpretation of these and other meals. Similarly, can we cast any light on the Last Supper and the final eschatological banquet?

Many other issues are also raised in an examination of these meals. Jesus ate within Gentile territory at the Feeding of the Multitude.(5) The Mary and Martha episode raises questions concerning Jesus' stance vis-a-vis women. Was the purpose of these meals to illustrate symbolically that God and man were sat down at table, and that man was able to be unified and to share communion with God? Was the messianic banquet being enacted on earth?

The place of the meal in Christ's resurrection is also established. An interesting question is whether the resurrection meals show strong links only with the Last Supper, or simply with the meals with believers, or with the meal-table in Jesus' entire ministry on earth. In addition, how do these meals relate to one of the few provisions Christ made for his Church, when He said "do this in remembrance of me"?

Alongside these specific issues we need to examine the rather wider concerns of Jesus' behaviour alongside contemporary conventions and Luke's theological purposes.

The Feeding of the 5,000. Lk.9: 16f.

In this passage we are told that Jesus plays host to a crowd of 5,000 men. It is the only miracle of Jesus' Galilean ministry that is recounted in all four Gospels.

(Mt.14: 13-21; Mk.6: 30-44; Lk.9: 10-17; John 6: 1-15)

The analysis of the episode is complicated by the account of the Feeding of the 4,000 in the other two Synoptics.

(Mt.15: 32-39; Mk.8: 1-10) It gives Luke a superficial resemblance to John, who also records one multiplication of loaves and fish.

Form-critically, the passage can be categorised as a miracle-story, specifically a nature miracle. Many commentators state the "it is recounted to show again the power of Jesus."(6) However, it is not stated that Jesus multiplied the food (see Lk.9: 16), but this is inferred from the statement that "all ate and had enough", and there were twelve baskets left over.(7) As Manson states, "The omission is interesting, because it indicates that the main interest of the original narrative lay not in the realm of the physical miracle, but in another quarter".(8)

It would seem that the main interest is indeed not primarily the miracle itself, but in its message for the disciples. For it is a decisive revelation for the disciples; no account of its effect on the crowds is given. The Feeding narrative is prefaced by the question of Jesus' identity.(Lk.9: 7-9) Is Jesus John the Baptist raised from the dead? Is he Elijah or one of the prophets? Again, following the Feeding is Peter's confession of faith. Jesus himself asks the question "Who do people say I am?" Again the same answers are given, John, Elijah or one of the prophets. It is Peter who replies "God's Messiah".

So throughout the passage itself, as with the other meal scenes, the main question raised is, "Who is this?" In all the meals the question of Jesus' authority is paramount. "Who is this that comes eating and drinking? Who is this that eats with tax-collectors and sinners? Who is this that forgives sins? Who is this that heals on the Sabbath?"

Now, "Who is this who can provide with such abundance?"

Perhaps we are to see Peter's confession as stemming from such a source of understanding. As in the surrounding passages, the question of Jesus' identity is raised in connection with the Old Testament. There is the link with the manna tradition in Moses' time (Exodus 16; Numbers 11) or the provision of bread by Elisha to the people. (2Kgs. 4: 42-44) Elisha, like the disciples, is hesitant to provide so little for so many, but is assured there would be more than ample.

We have seen that the questions, "Who is this man?," "By whose authority does He do these things? are common in the meal-time pericope. However, a difference may be noted in this meal, the first one recorded where Jesus ate with believers and followers. Before, such questioning has been clouded with uncertainty, misunderstanding and even hostility. Luke has not previously directly answered who it is who eats and drinks with outcasts, who heals and forgives sins. Here, however, several alternative identifications are suggested, only to be disregarded. Then Peter confesses that Christ is the Messiah.

However, the motif of misunderstanding is still present in this meal pericope. It is the Twelve who realise that there is a need amongst the crowd, that they are hungry and thirsty. They suggest that they should be sent off to look for food in the villages and farms around. Such a provision seems hardly adequate for a crowd of 5,000 people! Jesus suggests an alternative solution, "Give them something to eat yourselves". Here the disciples misunderstand Jesus and fail to realise the potential of the resources available. This misunderstanding on the part of the disciples is further

developed in John 6. Senior refers to it as the "negative trait" in the story.

The disciples do not realise how the resources available, the five loaves and two fishes, can be used. "But Jesus was able to take their limited and totally inadequate resources and give them back to them in such a way that they were able to feed the crowds and have enough to spare. Thus the narrative in its Lukan form depicts the inadequacy of the disciples in contrast to the ability to help the crowds".(9) With Jesus' help the disciples are able to do what otherwise they could not do. This reminds us of the miraculous draft of fish in Luke 5: 1-11. Both miracles required some action and obedience on the part of the disciples and the provision of divine plenty. This motif of abundance can also be found in John 2 at the wedding feast in Cana, where Jesus is the secret provider of wine at the celebration.(see also Jn.21: 1-8; Lk.5: 6; Lk.7: 36f; Lk.8: 8; Lk.14: 15f; Lk.21: 4)

Other devices emphasise the miraculous abundance and the power of Jesus to provide. It is here that we find the answer to the use of the number '5,000' and the mention of a "desert spot". The number 5,000 seems to be a hyperbolic means of expressing a very large number.(10) The point that is important is that Jesus had the power to supply a great need, and even to surpass what was required.

As several commentators note (e.g. Ellis, Geldenhuys, Plummer)(11) the Feeding of the Multitude appears to be the climax of Jesus' Galilean ministry. But where did this take place? It seems difficult to reconcile "Bethsaida"(v10) and a 'desert spot'.(v12)(12) The previous passage (Lk.9: 7-9) shows Herod's anxiety to see Jesus. Jesus and his disciples



may therefore have moved from Herod's grasp to Bethsaida, Philip's territory. However, this observation does not aid us with our previous dilemma. Many scholars feel that the overriding point is that this provision took place in Gentile territory. Others feel that the Feeding of the 5,000 was a Jewish feeding, while the 4,000 were Gentiles. This is at least possible.

The "desert" would seem to be mentioned for a number of reasons. It emphasised Jesus' power to provide nourishment in a place where there was no physical possibility of securing food. The miracle witnesses to Jesus as the giver of food to a hungry and thirsty people. The feeding in a lonely desert spot is surely intended to recall the provision of manna (Jn.6: 31) to the people of Israel. This leads the reader on to realize that Jesus is the provider not only of physical food, but also spiritual nourishment. The whole emphasis of the passage is on the abundance of the provision. The hungry are filled, with plenty to spare. It seems that in this symbolic fashion we are informed that there is enough spiritual food for all.(13)

For in the Lukan form of the story, the miracle that is worked is linked explicitly to the preaching of the Kingdom of God.(see 9: 11, also 4: 23) It would seem that Jesus wishes his disciples to focus on meal settings in the present age as occasions for demonstrating the Kingdom's power.(14) As Fitzmyer states "The bounty that is displayed in the miracle linked to such preaching clearly identifies Jesus as a person in whom God's message, activity, power, and creative presence are revealed".(15)

So we see that in this episode the motifs of host,



identity, misunderstanding, abundance and the Kingdom are all bound up together. But it would be a grave omission to discuss the Feeding without reference to the Last Supper. The language in which the Feeding miracles are described is sufficiently close to the language of the Last Supper to raise questions as to whether there is a deliberate parallelism.

All four Gospel accounts specify the actions with which Jesus accompanied the giving of food.

- a) Taking of the bread and fish.
- b) Looking up to Heaven.(16)
- c) Blessing.(17)
- d) Breaking them(18)
- e) Giving for distribution.

The same ritual is performed at the Last Supper with the bread and the cup. It does suggest, because of the linguistic similarities, that a symbolic or sacramental character belongs to the Feeding. However, these words may be Lukan or influenced by the early Church. Linguistically the reader is being directed to the relationship between the two. But it <sup>is</sup> one thing to see a resemblance in language, and another to see this in the mind of Jesus.

But it must be remembered that resemblances are not surprising, since these were the normal actions or gestures of a Jewish host. Nevertheless, it does seem unusual that a normal procedure be described at length, and hence resemblances with the Last Supper would appear to be in the mind of the writer.

There is this basic similarity, then, but also many differences, as listed below -

- a) There is no Passover setting at the Feeding.

- b) There is no multiplication of food at the Last Supper.
- c) Bread is common to both, but are we to equate the fish and wine?
- d) There are no words or interpretation at the Feeding.
- e) There is no connection with the death of Jesus.

It would seem that the most important link between the two episodes is that both were occasions of fellowship. As Marshall puts it, "The Last Supper was not anticipated in the Feeding miracles except both occasions were ones of fellow-ship with Jesus and satisfaction of hunger by Jesus". For, "in the last analysis to eat with Jesus was to share in fellow-ship with the Messiah as God's agent, who brings His Blessings to men and thus to anticipate the heavenly feast at the table of God".(19) The meals would seem to express the same theological message.

Mary and Martha, Lk.10: 38-42.

Luke is alone in recording this incident. It would seem most probable that the event took place in Bethany,(see Jn.11: 1-2; 12: 1-3; Mk.14: 3) and it also seems reasonable to assume that the story reflects a dinner scene. Jesus is welcomed, that is, as a guest,(10: 38; cf.7: 36; 19: 6; Acts 17: 7; contrast Lk.9: 53) and reclines on his side at the table, as was the custom. Many "sat at the Lord's feet", away from the table. This would seem to be the picture of a rabbi instructing his pupil. The extraordinary element is that the pupil is a woman.(20)

The position of women in the social system of the contemporary New Testament world is unenviable. Women were regarded as of an inferior status. Persians, Greeks and Jews(21) all had sayings in which man gives thanks that he is not

an unbeliever, or uncivilised, that he is not a woman or a slave! In the Old Testament women appear more as chattels than people. In first century Judaism the position was scarcely improved. However, Luke in this scene does not hesitate to depict a woman as a disciple sitting at Jesus' feet. This is extraordinary if we contrast the attitude of the sages in later rabbinic tradition.(22)

Indeed the whole attitude of Jesus to women in Luke's Gospel is surprising. Jesus turned in his parables to the everyday anxieties and joys of womanhood.(eg.Lk.15: 8f; 18: 1f) He called a woman the daughter of Abraham (Lk.13: 16); He healed a sick woman on the Sabbath (Lk.13: 10f); He did not shun unclean women (Lk.7: 38f) Several women accompanied Him, Mary, Joanna, Susanna and many others, and they provided for Him.(Lk.8: 2-3) Women were with Him in His suffering (Lk.23: 28f) and his resurrection.(Lk.24: 10) It is a woman who recognises who Jesus is and accepts His forgiveness (Lk.7: 36f; Jn.11: 27. No women were, however, admitted to the Twelve. Jesus, then, does not shun or depreciate women in Luke, but rather "indirectly lifts from women the curse of her sex and sets her at the side of man as equally as <sup>a</sup>child of God".(23)

So in Luke Jesus encourages a woman to learn from Him. This episode goes beyond 8: 2-3. Her position is certainly that of a listening disciple (cf.8: 35: Acts 22: 3) It reveals Mary's "zealous readiness to learn".(24) What is Jesus's message to Mary? Mary sits listening to Jesus and his words, but Martha is distracted by her many tasks ( ΠΕΡΙΕΟΡᾶ ΤΟ - allowed her attention to wander). Jesus issues a gentle rebuke to Martha (and to all women)

not to divert Mary from His words to less essential tasks. Martha is not to busy herself with fretting and fussing about outward things, causing neglect of the quiet worship of the Lord.(cf.Jn.11: 27) The importance of practical activity is set against inward devotion to "the Lord".(v39)

Martha may be the proper hostess, but Mary is more importantly the proper disciple. (In the preceding episode there was a contrast between the Good Samaritan, who acts as a good host, and the Jewish priest and levite). Mary is not concerned with her self-importance as a hostess, but realises that the priority lies in the realm of discipleship. Equally Jesus is not concerned to have his rights as a guest, but wishes to fulfil his mission and to teach. Christ comes to give, not receive. "If anyone presumes to welcome Him, let him not become preoccupied with preparing a great dinner, but rather leave himself time to listen".(25) It is reflected in the Mishna tractate Aboth, that the supreme offer of hospitality is to bring an attentive heart to the Rabbi's teaching. "Let thy house become a meeting-house for the wise and powder thyself in the dust of their feet and drink their words with thirstiness".(Aboth.i: 4)

We see then that Jesus was prepared to teach women and afford them a place in His following. He was a man who not only had time for tax-collectors, sinners and outcasts, but rejoiced in the development of womanhood. The Lukan Jesus' primary vehicle for social change was the structure or attitude to life in the community of his disciples. "By embodying structures of social relationships that reflected the new life in the spirit under the leadership of Jesus, the Christian community functioned in the larger society

as an agent of social change".(26)

Alongside the social issues stand the cultural and theological issues of this episode. Again the question of authority and identity are present. The question of who this is who has the authority to raise the status of womanhood runs through the narrative. This is no episode designed to instruct women about the entertainment of travelling preachers, rather women are to eat at table with Jesus in the final banquet and are able to share fellow-ship with Him on earth, as He provides spiritual nourishment. Again the meal and gospel are linked together.

The Last Supper Lk.22: 14-23.

Scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to the Last Supper and have examined questions such as chronology, whether it was a Passover meal, and paschal motifs at length. It is therefore proposed to undertake a more general treatment of the Supper here. We are primarily concerned with the Supper as one of the meals which Jesus ate, and with what happened at this meal and the significance attached to it.

For within Luke this supper scene is also "last" in the sense that it is the final earthly meal in a series of dinner episodes.

It would seem that Jesus did not want interference by the authorities. He knew His death was imminent and He took elaborate care to have the meal undisturbed.(Lk.22: 7-13)

The meal is placed during the time of the Passover (Lk.22: 7,8), and there has been considerable debate as to whether this meal is to be seen as a Passover meal, or as an ordinary Jewish meal. The argument usually centres on

the fact that the Passover was an annual celebration, while the eucharist came to be celebrated at least once a week. However, as Moloney states, "The Passover and Eucharist, if not of the same species, are of the same genus, namely Jewish ritual memorial".(27) This is backed up by Christ's reported use of the word ἀνάμνησις, a commemoration or memorial.

Other proposals for the character of the Last Supper which the historical Jesus would have eaten have been made this century, and they have been scrutinized by Jeremias.(28) Space does not permit us to summarize his criticism here; but we will list the proposals -

- a) A Qiddūš meal (to sanctify the Sabbath).
- b) Ḥabūrāh meal (celebrated by a fraternity of Jews).
- c) An Essene meal.

Jeremias himself makes a case for the Last Supper as a Passover meal.

The Lukan supper account has its counterpart in Mk.14; 22f; Mt.26: 26f (and cf.Jn.13-17). It is almost twice as long as either of the other Synoptic reports.(29) The central part of the supper scene is set out by Luke in the following way -

- a) Vow of abstention (15-18).
- b) Interpretation of bread and wine (19-20).
- c) Prophecy of betrayal (21-23).

At this table Jesus both acts as host (v14-22) and serves as waiter.(v25-27 cf.Jn.13) His disciples must do likewise (12: 42-53; 22: 27-30) So we see that central to Luke's Last Supper are words about guests and hosts.(v24-30) Jesus requires the Twelve (30) to be guests in his

presence, so they can learn to be servant hosts. For they must take up Jesus' table ministry and become hosts of the Kingdom themselves.

The main difference between this and other meals is the words of interpretation said by Jesus over the bread and wine. His actions in taking and blessing the cup and bread are in no way remarkable by themselves. However, a symbolic significance is attached to the bread and wine through Jesus' words. Luke alone records Jesus' expression of strong affection for his disciples as he acts as host. He is also the only Gospel writer to link the phrase "for you" (v19-20) with the words said over the bread and cup. This again highlights the Lukan Jesus' care for his followers, as does His promise in v.30, "you will eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom and you will sit on thrones to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel". So we see the Kingdom linked with the meal table. And in v.32 Jesus looks beyond Peter's denial and predicts for him a position of spiritual leadership.

So we see that their extraordinary friendship is sealed in bread and wine. As Jeremias writes, "They (the disciples) are guests of the Messiah-designate. As his chosen associates, they receive His body and His 'blood of the covenant', first of all to seal their extraordinary friendship with Him, to take into their very bodies the peace and trust and hope that they have begun to taste in their table-companionship with Him".(31) The Lukan formula identifies the cup with the new covenant.(cf.Mk.14: 28; Jer.31: 31; Ex.24: 5)

Every ancient covenant was sealed by some symbolic act, here the new covenant is offered. Jesus offers the free



gift of salvation through his death. It is here that the other seven meals Jesus has eaten receive further meaning. Jesus offers this salvation to the tax-collectors, Pharisees and women he has eaten with. This is no simple recurrence of the Passover rite, but the fulfilment of it, leading to the consummation of redemption by God. There is an eschatological emphasis. As Manson states "His death is not a tragedy simply or a price demanded by fidelity to a cause. It is the means of bringing on, instituting, applying and sealing a redemption which by His life and word He has sought to effect, but which only the final sacrifice of His life will bring to fulfilment".(32) It is this meal which perpetuates the memorial of the sacrifice, by which the redemption is won.

The fellow-ship aspect of the meal is also significant. The disciples are invited to recognize in the bread a share of His body and to constitute in this way a new community among them. This can be clearly seen in the directive "take this and divide it among yourselves".(v17) So a new mode of presence among his disciples is inaugurated. It is the last of the fellow-ship meals at which Jesus is present in the flesh. His disciples are to continue to commemorate it together, not on their own.

The narrative closes with an allusion to the presence of a traitor. This in Luke appears as a last appeal to the traitor, who is given no name. The unified communion, it seems, is broken. It would seem that even a seat at the Lord's table is no guarantee against apostasy. We see then the negative trait of misunderstanding and the question of Jesus' identity. Here also a warning is laid before

the readers, and a contrast made with the willing martyrdom of Jesus.

The other disciples are mystified and begin to examine themselves and each other; the Last Supper becomes an occasion for serious and solemn self-examination. So "the pattern of divine promise offered amid human weakness and sin continues", (33) with a jealous dispute over who is the greatest. The contrast between the concerns of the disciples and those of Jesus is further heightened. In Jesus we are shown the illustration that real greatness consists in serving. (cf. John 13) We have seen this motif of misunderstanding or this "negative trait" in all the meals. It is a source of misunderstanding that Jesus ate with outcasts. The meals He ate with Pharisees display undercurrents of hostility and suspicion. Even in those meals eaten with followers, this motif is still present. The disciples do not understand the extent of resources available to feed the 5,000. Martha is too distracted to give her full attention to Christ, despite the honour accorded her. In this, the Last Supper, the presence of Judas, the jealous dispute about greatness and the imminence of Peter's denial (Lk.22: 31-34) continue the motif.

Nevertheless the divine promise is issued, (22: 28-30) the Twelve are to eat and drink at the table in the Kingdom. This meal becomes an anticipation of the messianic meal and a symbol of the disciples' fellow-ship with Christ.

It may be that we have in this account a record of the Lukan community's human understanding of its eschatological situation. Or perhaps we have a picture of the eucharistic theology of the first generation of Christians, or Jesus'

view of the institution of the eucharist.

It would seem that there is much evidence to suggest that the eucharist was celebrated soon after the death of Jesus.(e.g. Acts 2; 1 Cor.11) Why was it celebrated, unless by divine command of Jesus at the Last Supper? It could be for the reasons Hans Lietzmann suggested:-

- a) In memory of the Lord and the meals He shared on earth.
- b) That Paul through a special revelations (1 Cor. 11: 23) turned the simple fellow-ship meal into a memorial of the Last Supper.
- c) It was inspired by the meals of the pagan mystery cults.

These suppositions are not unreasonable, but nor are they likely. It is unlikely that Paul was responsible for the institution of the Eucharist and that the practice then pervaded the early church including the Jerusalem church. It would mean the Gospel sources were influenced very quickly. The most reasonable explanation seems to be the most common one, that Jesus ate the Last Supper and commanded its continuation, the memorial being not for the Last Supper only, but in memory of all the meals Jesus ate on earth. Such a command coming on the night of Jesus' death would be a cherished memory. As Jeremias writes, "This meal of Jesus with His disciples must not be isolated, but should rather be seen as one of a long series of daily meals they shared together".(34) This was a final meal, a farewell meal, and what Jesus said and did at this meal must be understood against this background.

The Meal at Emmaus Lk.24: 13-35.

It is interesting to note that during the forty days from the time of the resurrection of Christ to his ascension, and in the few pages the evangelists devote to this period,

the meals of the risen Christ with his disciples play a prominent role. Jesus on several occasions manifests Himself to His disciples, who are still hesitant in faith, through the medium of the meal. The disciples travelling to Emmaus recognize Jesus through the breaking of bread.(Lk.24: 13-35; Mk.16: 12-13) The risen Christ is only gradually made manifest in His new status to these journeying disciples. He appears to them as God of old (see Gen.3: 8; 16: 7-14; 18: 1-22) liked to walk among men. Again the question of identity and the issue of misunderstanding are present. He appears to the Eleven, "while they were at table" and reproaches their unbelief.(Mk.16: 14. This is probably the same appearance as Lk.24: 36-43) Luke adds that Jesus ate a morsel of fish in their sight. Jesus also appears to his Apostles by Lake Tiberias and breakfasts with them with bread and fish.(Jn.21: 1-23) Each evangelist, except Matthew, mentions some form of resurrection meal.

In addition to the Gospel witness, information is provided by Acts. In Acts 1: 3 we are told that Jesus provided "ample proof that He was alive". Further in Acts 10: 41 it would seem to be part of the resurrection creed or Christian catechism that Jesus rose and then ate with his followers.

"He was put to death by hanging on a gibbet; but God raised Him to life on the third day, and allowed Him to appear, not to the whole people, but to witnesses whom God had chosen in advance - to us, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead."(Acts 10: 39-41)

The first to see the risen Jesus for Luke are not the women (Mt.28: 1-10; Mk.16: 9-11; John 20: 10-18) or the Eleven, but "two" others. Only one of these men is later

named as Cleopas. It is suggested by Godet (35) that Cleopas is a name of Greek origin and that the man was probably a proselyte. The men are on their way, "to a village called Emmaus, which lay about seven miles from Jerusalem".(24: 13-14) Leaney (36) suggests that modern day Kulonieh was their destination. As they walk they discuss recent happenings. The remainder of the episode is set out, as follows:

- 1) Opening conversation with stranger.(24: 13-24)
- 2) The Lord's exposition.(24: 25-27)
- 3) Climatic Recognition.(24: 28-32)
- 4) Report to the Eleven.(24: 33-35)

C. H. Dodd (37) classified the post-resurrection appearance stories. This story he saw as an example of a circumstantial narrative. It displays the craft of a storyteller, his concern for details, conversation, traits of character and a concern for dramatic development.

The whole story depends upon the motif of dramatic concealment. The motif that Jesus looked "different" is widespread.(Mk.16: 12; Jn.21: 4; Jn.20: 13) The disciples were suffering from some kind of blindness, spiritual or otherwise. We are told later (Lk.24: 31) that their "eyes were opened".(Jn.9: 39-41; Lk.15: 11-32)

The main point or purpose of Jesus' conversation on the road is to point out the fact that the Messiah's suffering and glorification are part of the expected fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.(24: 26f) Again the disciples have misunderstood what is to happen. They are spiritually blind. They had hoped He was the man to liberate Israel (24: 21), but have misunderstood His identity and authority. They are sceptical about the resurrection.(24: 22-24) So

the negative trait of the disciples' disbelief and uncomprehending of Jesus' purposes is to be found in this meals-episode too. The limitations of human weakness seem to be an ever-present contrast with the strength of Jesus and His intentions.

A purpose of Jesus' exposition is to show to the Lukan community that the risen Jesus is now revealed to the church through the exposition of scripture and the common meal of fellow-ship. The Kingdom is again linked to a meal-episode. In the reading of scripture the risen Lord will continue to be present, though unseen. This would indeed seem to be one purpose of the passage, but a subsidiary one. As previously stated, the main point is to emphasise the fact that the resurrection is a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.

The narrative then continues to make its second important statement. The risen Lord appeared to two witnesses and through the breaking of bread was recognised to be Jesus. (see *κλάσις* Acts 2: 42)(38) Jesus is invited to share their table. Though He is the guest, He assumes the role of host. The Blessing and breaking of bread recall a characteristic action of Jesus in His lifetime (Lk.9: 16; 22: 19), and this aids recognition. Their eyes are opened. These disciples have presumably seen Jesus preside at table and recognise something in His manner. The object is accomplished, the disciples are convinced that the Messiah is alive.

As there is no mention of wine or any interpretative words, it seems unnecessary to see an account of a Lord's Supper for "Holy Communion" here. It would seem more likely

that the disciples, who were not present at the Last Supper, recall a characteristic action of Jesus.(9: 16) The fellowship meals and feedings were most probably in their minds, although it is of course not impossible that the traditions of the Last Supper had come to exert an influence on the passage and event by the time it was written down.

Certainly the association of the appearances of the risen Christ with the breaking of bread and eating of food are highly significant for the continuing rite of the Lord's Supper. They provide connecting links with the practice of the early church.(Acts 2: 42,46) Further reason is given to the church to celebrate their fellowship in a meal, in association with the divine command given at the Last Supper. Due to the fact the Lord appeared at meal times, the church continued to expect His presence at the eucharist.

The fact that Jesus vanished then from their sight is pertinent to the passage and its understanding. The bodily fellowship Jesus had through meals during His lifetime is temporarily restored. However, as Leaney states, "That He became invisible is eloquent of the fact that now they are once again with Him and He with them, there is no need of their bodily fellowship with the Lord, who now enters His glory".(39) To abide with them in His old manner is not His object, rather his purpose is to prepare the disciples for the revelation of the resurrected Jesus without being able to see Him. This pericope gives help to Christians living in the era after the cessation of the resurrection appearances.

Finally we note that yet again one of the underlying threads of the story is the question of Jesus' identity.

Who is this stranger who walks along the road explaining the scriptures? The disciple now no longer even recognise the bodily form of Jesus. Then the question is answered in the breaking of bread; the question, asked at so many meal tables, at last receives its full reply. This is the Risen Messiah.

Without a moment's delay the two return to Jerusalem to inform the Eleven; and the story becomes confirmation of Jesus' appearance to Simon. It is reaffirmed that He was recognised, "by them at the breaking of bread".(Lk.24: 35)

The Eating of the Fish Lk.24: 41-43.

It would seem that Jesus then appeared to the Eleven. (Lk.24: 36-43; cf.Mk.16: 14) If this is the same incident is the same one described in Mark (16: 14), the disciples were at table;(40) this would explain the availability of the fish.(41)(24: 42-3) Again the disciples are doubtful and fearful; they have still not grasped the fact of the resurrection.

The physical reality of the risen Christ is emphasised; the disciples are invited to touch His hands and feet, His flesh and bones.(cf.John 20: 26-29) As they are still unconvinced, final proof is given as Jesus eats in the presence of His disciples(42)(24: 42-3), proving He is no ghost(24: 37) This is intended to stress the identity and the physical reality of the risen Christ. The Eleven are then commissioned, after their minds have been opened to understand the Scriptures. (Lk.24: 44-49; cf.34: 25-27) They are sent to proclaim the risen Lord's forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk.24: 47-49; cf.Mt.28: 16-20; Mk.16: 14-18; Jn.20: 19-23, see also



Jn.21: 15-23)

It is, then, in these final meals on earth with His followers that all the misunderstandings and questionings about Jesus are answered. His full and true identity is finally disclosed. He has the authority to eat with sinners; to teach women and to heal on the Sabbath. His gift of salvation, realised fully in His death and depicted in the Last Supper, is available to sinners, as well as Pharisees. He is not one of the prophets, He is not Moses, Elijah, Elisha or John. He has the authority to forgive sins, He is the Messiah and the Risen Lord. It is He who commissions His disciples to take His message to all nations.

The Last Supper, then, is a very important meal in the series of fellow-ship meals Jesus ate with his disciples. It is there that Jesus reveals the imminence and meaning of His death, but His identity is still not fully known or understood. It is at the meals with the Risen Lord that the final piece of the identity-puzzle is put in place. Jesus is the Messiah, who has power even over death. Peter proclaimed this identity after the feeding of the 5,000 (Lk.9: 18-22; cf.Jn.6: 69), but is sworn to secrecy.(v21-22) The true nature of the Messiahship, however, is still not understood and is subject to misinterpretation. This is shown at the Last Supper when a dispute breaks out over who is the greatest (21: 24-30) and in Peter's denial (22: 31-34; 54-61) Jesus tries to warn them (Lk.22: 35-38) what will be required of them. Nevertheless, we find further misunderstanding about the nature of His mission in the words of the Emmaus disciples. He is depicted as "a prophet powerful in speech and action".(24: 19) He is dead, but

"we had been hoping he was the man to liberate Israel".(24: 21)

There is continual confusion, doubt and fear portrayed about the resurrection.(24: 4,5,11,23-24,36-43) The women are terrified,(24: 5) their reports are seen as nonsense by the apostles (24: 11) who refuse to believe it.(24: 11) The apostles later think they are seeing a ghost.(24: 37)

All this despite continual efforts to relate and explain the Scripture's prophecy of the resurrection (Lk.24: 4-8, 25-27,35,(38),44-49) It is not until He has eaten with them that they realise who He is (24: 30-31) and believe He is the Risen Lord.(24: 42-43)(see also Mk.16: 14-18; Jn.21: 9-14) It is then that they understand the nature of His Kingship and His mission for them. So it is in these resurrection meals that the climax of the question of identity is reached and revealed.

### Conclusions.

#### a) Historical Reasons.

The most obvious reason these meals were recorded is, of course, a historical one. These meals were part of Jesus' earthly ministry. Due to the later importance of the rite of the Lord's Supper in the early church, these meals presumably gained additional significance. However, as we have argued, this is only one reason among many; the meals have their own intrinsic values and purposes.

#### b) Motifs.

In each meal certain motifs have reoccurred:-

##### i) Host-Guest.

The host-guest motif has been continually present. Jesus is host to 5,000 men.(Lk.9: 16f) He is the guest at the home of Mary and Martha (10: 39f), here He shows that

a woman's role in society is not only that of hostess, but also disciple. Jesus also plays host at the Last Supper (22: 14f) and speaks specifically about the roles of guests and hosts.(v26-27) Although a guest of the disciple on the way to Emmaus He acts as host.(24: 29-31) Similarly He joins the Eleven at table as a guest and eats some fish. (24: 41-43)

ii) Community-Fellowship.

In each of these meals eaten with His followers we find a sense of community or fellow-ship. The 5,000 eat together (9: 16-17), Jesus shares a meal with His friends Mary and Martha,(10: 39f) the Twelve eat with Jesus at the Last Supper and several phrases indicate His love for them.(22: 19-20,30,32) Again on the road to Emmaus the sense of fellow-ship between them leads the two to invite Jesus to stay with them.(24: 29) Finally He appears offering peace and proof to the Eleven.(24: 36f)

iii) The Preaching of the Kingdom.

Each meal episode is linked strongly to the preaching about the Kingdom and the exposition of Scriptures. The 5,000 are gathered listening to Jesus preach about the Kingdom. Mary is taught by Jesus.(10: 39) At the Last Supper the disciples learn about the Kingdom (22: 16-17), of service in the Kingdom (v26-27), and the promise is issued that they "will eat and drink at His table in the Kingdom and that they will sit on thrones and rule over the twelve tribes of Israel".(v30) Both resurrection meals involve the exposition of Scripture (24: 27; 45f) particularly the prophecies concerning the Messiah's suffering and resurrection. We note that the other meals in Luke also attest the Kingdom,

as Jesus eats with tax-collectors and explains the nature of the Kingdom to the Pharisees.

iv) Misunderstanding.

An instance of this is recorded at each meal. The disciples fail to understand the abundance or resources available to feed the 5,000.(9: 13) Martha does not realise the importance of Mary's discipleship.(10: 40) At the Last Supper disputes break out (24: 24), the betrayal (v21) and denial are predicted (v31f) and Jesus' suffering is misunderstood.(v23,v33) At Emmaus, the disciples show they have not understood Jesus' mission (24: 19-24) or suffering (v25-26), neither do they recognise him. Again, when he appeared to the Eleven they were terrified (v37) and doubts were present.(v37-43)

v) Identity.

In each episode the underlying or sometimes more explicit question is, "Who is this man?" This question, as we have seen is answered in various ways. It is only finally in the resurrection meals that Jesus receives his full identity. He is the risen Messiah who commissions His disciples to carry on His work. Proof of Jesus' resurrected flesh and bones is given in the breaking of bread and the eating of fish. This proof, as illustrated by Acts, was important in early Christian 'creeds'. So questions left unanswered at other meals are finally resolved.

So it is in these meals that we see Jesus as Provider, Teacher, Liberator, Offerer of Salvation and as the Risen Messiah. His identity is revealed and the facets of His ministry developed. We are now able to appreciate fully the man who has been eating with tax-collectors, Pharisees

and sinners. He is now seen eating in fellowship and in communion with his disciples. This is a foretaste of the Messianic Banquet, when all the negative traits that endanger the earthly meal will be removed.

Footnotes. . Jesus Eats with Disciples and Followers.

- (1) See chapter 2 of this thesis.
- (2) An examination of the arguments or disputes that arose between the disciples illustrates this point. For example: Mk.9: 33-37; 10: 35-45; Lk.22: 24-27, Lk.9: 46-48.
- (3) J. Koenig, N.T. Hospitality, p.32.
- (4) An example of this is P. Rouillard's statement "There can, indeed, be no doubt that Christ thought long in advance of the sacrament of bread and wine which He wished to leave to His disciples and that the multiplication of loaves and other meals were for him a kind of preparation for, or sketch of, the Eucharist". "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist" Part 2, Worship, 1979, part 53, p.40.  
This is surely an oversimplification of the situation, and in saying there can "be no doubt" an overstatement as well - sadly, Rouillard is by no means the only scholar to have assumed that all Gospel meals must have strong eucharistic overtones.
- (5) See I.H. Marshall, Luke, p.357f.  
G.H. Boobyer, "Eucharistic Interpretation of the Miracle of Loaves in Mark's Gospel" J.T.S. (3) 1952, pp.161-171.  
N.A. Beck, "Reclaiming a Biblical Text", C.B.Q. 43, 1981, pp.49-56.
- (6) J.A. Fitzmyer, The Gospel According to Luke, p.763.
- (7) This fact is mentioned in all four Gospels.
- (8) W. Manson, Gospel of Luke, p.105.
- (9) I.H. Marshall, Luke, p.357.
- (10) H. Schürmann raises the question whether the number should be taken literally or not. (Das Geheimnis Jesu, Vol.1, p.515) Later the 5,000 are instructed to "sit down in groups of fifty or so". Here Schürmann (pp.515-7) makes reference to Exodus 18: 21 and comments on the usual size of Christian housegroups. It is surely not necessary to see such parallelism; the arrangements could be for purely practical reasons of distribution. See also J. Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.767.
- (11) But see Fitzmyer, ibid. p.764.
- (12) See Mt.14: 13,15; Mk.6: 31,32,35; Jn.6: 3.
- (13) See Jn.6: 35f.
- (14) See J. Koenig, op.cit. p.45.
- (15) J. Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.763.
- (16) cf. Jn.11: 41 and Lk.18: 13. An attitude of worship.

- (17) Grace was usually said at the meal; as confirmed by Acts 27: 35; 1 Cor.10: 30; Rom.14: 6; 1 Tim.4: 3f.
- (18) The breaking of bread was a normal action of Acts 27: 35.
- (19) I.H. Marshall, op.cit. pp.
- (20) For Luke's attitude to women, see Lk.1: 46f; 7: 11f; 8: 1f; Lk.7: 36f; 10: 38f; 13: 10f; 15: 8f; 21: 1f; 24: 1f.
- (21) See the 18 Benedictions.
- (22) See A. Oepke,  $\Upsilon\upsilon\nu\eta$ , T.D.N.T. 1, pp.781-782. Conversation was not to be held with a woman (cf. Jn.4: 9,27) even if she is a relative.(B.Erub.53b; Ab.1,5) It is also written, "may the words of Torah be burned, they should not be handed over to women".(J.Sota,10a; 8) Judaism did not forbid women to be instructed in Torah, although it was unusual for a rabbi to bother to so instruct. For, "the man who teaches his daughter the Torah teaches her extravagance".(Sota.3: 4; cf.b.Sota,21b) The wife was not to pray at table, instruct children, nor bear witness; she is not even required to keep the whole Torah. She could be divorced on trivial grounds. Also see J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p.359f.
- (23) A. Oepke, ibid. p.785.
- (24) K. Weiss, " $\tau\theta\upsilon\varsigma$ ", T.D.N.T. 6, p.630.
- (25) P. Rouillard, "From Human Meal to Christian Eucharist," Worship Part 2, (53) 1979, p.42.
- (26) D.H. Talbert, "Martyrdom and the Lukan Social Ethic" in Political Issues in Luke-Acts, ed.R.J. Cassidy and P.J. Scharper, p.108.
- (27) R. Moloney, "The Early Eucharist: The Jewish Background", Milltown Studies Vol.2 (1978) pp.1-10.
- (28) J. Jeremias, Eucharistic Words of Jesus, pp.26-36.
- (29) For a good summary of the Lukan sources and redaction etc. see Fitzmyer, The Gospel of Luke, pp.1386-1387.
- (30) For discussion of whether women were present at the Last Supper see Quentin Quesnell, "The Women at Luke's Supper" in Political Issues in Luke-Acts, ec. Cassidy & Scharper, pp.59-79. See also G. Lohfink, Jesus and Community: The Social Dimension of Christian Faith, p.90f.
- (31) op.cit. p.204.
- (32) W. Manson, The Gospel of Luke, p.241.
- (33) I.H. Marshall, op.cit.

- (34) op.cit. p.204.
- (35) F. Godet, A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, p.353.
- (36) A.R.C. Leaney, Gospel According to Saint Luke, p.293.
- (37) C.H. Dodd, The Appearances, p.13-14.
- (38) See J. Fitzmyer, op.cit. p.1569.
- (39) op.cit. p.293.
- (40) We know the risen Christ did "eat with" his apostles.  
(Acts 1: 4; 10: 41)
- (41) A few MSS. add honeycomb. See E. Nestle, "The Honeycomb  
in Lk.XXIV", ET. 22 (1910-1911), pp.567-568.
- (42) For eating on the part of angels. See Gen.18: 8; 19: 3;  
Tob.6: 5.



Chapter 6. Jesus' Meals in Luke, Enacted Parables.

Jesus' actions and His spoken parables are closely bound up with each other. Jesus not only proclaimed the message of the parables, but He lived it and embodied it in His own person. He not only preaches the message of the Kingdom of God, He Himself is the message. It is our contention that His most significant parabolic action was the extension of hospitality to outcasts (Lk.19: 15; 15: 1-2) and their inclusion in His circle of disciples.(Lk.5: 27f) His feasts with sinners are signs that the Messianic Age has arrived.(1)

Why did Jesus tell Parables?

The parables on the whole were addressed or directed towards Jesus' opponents or critics, the Pharisees. Through His parables Jesus tried to affect, win over and influence the thoughts and lifestyles of the Pharisees. For the parable was a form of argument. It was, "an urgent endeavour on the part of the speaker towards the listener".( 2) Jesus sought to create a new possibility in a situation and to compel his listeners to a decision.

He told many parables as a vindication or defence of His lifestyle.(Lk.5: 27-39; 19: 1-10) He declared to His critics, using the medium, that God cares about sinners. In this way He defended Himself against those who attacked His practice of eating with the despised. J. Jeremias(3) summarises this in the following way:-

- a) He directed the attention of His critics to the poor to whom He is proclaiming the Good News.(Lk.7: 41-43)
- b) He directed His critics' attention to themselves.(Lk.14: 16-24)
- c) Finally, He vindicated the proclamation of Good News

to the despised. (Lk. 15)

We must try to hear the parables of Jesus with the ears of their first listeners, to grasp their original meaning. For the parables tell of typical situations and everyday events. We must try to listen to the stories as Jesus' audience would have listened; this means, amongst other things, abandoning the typically narrow view of the Pharisee as a "hypocritical, proud, pious man".

The Pharisees' purity laws set up social and theological barriers around them and hence the Pharisees understandably found Jesus' proclamation of the Gospel to the outcasts very difficult to accept. For such a message involved the despised being raised in social status, while the Pharisee would be lowered. The message required that a whole system for defining the sacred and profane be abandoned. No longer could defined actions and regulations render a person unclean. Rather the purity of the community became defined in social terms. Hence, social tensions were set into the whole theological and eschatological drama.

Jesus' viewpoint is only comprehensible in terms of the entire social reality of which it was part. Hence it is necessary to remember at this point the nature of society in first century Palestine. When looking at studies of society at this time, for example those of G. Theissen(4) or J. Elliott (5), nowhere in their models do we find a category labelled 'religion'. For there was no independent religious sector, rather religion was embedded within all sectors of the system as a whole. There were no independent social activities, institutions and organizations.

So society was affected by the religious system and the

religious system affected society. Therefore any challenge Jesus made to religious views affected the social world and community structure. Both Judaism and Christianity were neither totally religious, nor totally social. They were a combination of the two. This is why Jesus' social action of eating with sinners affected the religious authorities.

P. Berger(6) argues that every human society is an enterprise of 'world-building', that is every community constructs a scheme of order and value. In the Gospel of Luke we see the social world of Christianity defining its scheme of order and value. We see Jesus challenging values and redefining the social world. In His parables He justifies this challenge and His definitions of society.

So religion was inextricably bound up in the social life of the community. In addition we must remember how strongly the life of the individual was bound up with that of the community.(7) This helps us to understand the Pharisees' reaction to Jesus' parables and table-fellowship. In a society where the life of the individual is closely bound up with the community, the values are strictly defined. Only in a society where the life of the individual is private can far-reaching tolerance be practised. Jesus crossed the lines society had set up and so disturbed the order.

So Jesus' actions in table-fellowship and the message in His parables received a mixed reaction. He appealed across the barriers of family, ethnic origin and social status. It was precisely this appeal that "aroused the hopes of the alienated as well as the anxieties of the privileged".(8)

God's mercy for the Alienated.

Jesus proclaimed in his table-fellowship and parables the message that God's mercy extended to the outcast. The status of the outcast and alienated was bound up with the Jews' concept of sin and forgiveness.

a) Who were the Alienated?

The concept of sin in Judaism was highly developed; it was this concept that defined who was a marginal in society. There was a whole system for dealing with sin and impurity. This system involved Temple sacrifice, the Day of Atonement, rituals and cleansing, almsgiving, repentance and suffering. Although forgiveness ultimately came from God, this system was an important vehicle in the realisation of that forgiveness. The above notions affected the whole of society and contact between groups in a community.

Various groups in the community were regarded as unclean and transgressors of the Law. For example Gentiles were regarded as sinners and therefore unclean. In addition there were a number of professions which made those who practised them 'as Gentiles'. This included tax-collectors.(9) Such people were denied certain civil rights, which even the illegitimately born Israelite could claim.

Although one could approach a wicked man to teach him the laws of God, certainly the close company of a meal was ruled out. The link between social behaviour and theological notions is close in this area.

b) What did Jesus Offer the Alienated?

Jesus offered forgiveness to the despised. "The divine generosity was specifically exhibited in the calling of publicans and sinners who had no merit before God".(10) Jesus' message

of divine forgiveness to the outcast, often through table-fellowship, was not without results. The appeal, as well as its success, caused a scandal. To those who objected, Jesus proclaimed in parables, "the Kingdom of God is like this .....".

What was it, though, that the Pharisees objected to? The Pharisees did not refuse fellow-ship with the penitent.(11) They did not hold the earlier life of penitents against them. It would seem that in the eyes of the Pharisees the table companions of Jesus were not penitents. This must have been a scandal to the Pharisees. For "if they are to recognize Jesus' table companions as penitents - men in whom the pious Jews could discover absolutely no sign of repentance - then they must understand the nature of repentance in a radically new way".(12) This would involve a whole reorientation of their thinking.

Sanders, as we saw in our discussion in chapter 3, supports this view. The scandal is that Jesus offers the Kingdom to those, who by the normal standards of Judaism, were wicked. "The novelty and offence of Jesus' message was that the wicked who needed Him would be included in the Kingdom even though they did not repent as it was universally understood.....".(13) Jesus promised the sinner membership in the Kingdom without the usual mechanism of righteousness being fulfilled.

Bornkamm(14) takes this further. He argues that repentance to the Jewish way of thinking was the condition that afforded the sinner the hope of grace. But Jesus offers grace, that repentance may come. For Jesus, repentance is not a human action preparing the way for grace, rather repentance comes from God as an event alongside the arrival of the Kingdom.

The Pharisees objected that the moral safeguards of the Law could not be cast aside and the lawless accepted into the Kingdom. Jesus told the objectors the parable of the Great Feast.(Lk.14: 15-24; Mt.22: 1-14) If the places at a feast are vacant they must be filled. The parable impresses upon us the grace of the invitation and the mercy of God. There is a similar message in the parable of the Prodigal Son.(15: 11-32) It is time for rejoicing when the lost son repents and returns home.(see also Lk.15: 1-10) No test of genuineness is demanded of him.(compare Lk.5: 1-11; 19: 1-10) The father justifies the feast, and the end of the story shows that the feast is the issue.(see v.28-32) The elder son arrives only when the feast is in progress. God is generous, paying a full day's wage for an hours work. This is what the Kingdom of God is like.

God is not only generous in forgiving the returning, repenting sinner.(see Lk.18: 9-14) He seeks out the lost, the despised, the outcast. This is explained clearly in the parables of the Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep.(Lk.15)

These stories "depict vividly ..... the extravagant concern (as it seemed to some) which Jesus displayed for the depressed classes of the Jewish community".(15) The use of the woman in the story of the Lost Coin reinforces Jesus' social concern. In these parables the Lukan Jesus proclaims that in His actions God's love for sinners is made effectual.

So Jesus vindicates his table companionship with sinners through these parables. He declares that God's love knows no bounds, claiming that He is acting as God's representative. Moreover, in this way the Lukan Jesus makes a statement about His identity and mission which the Pharisees fail to accept.

Jesus' view of forgiveness and acceptance was radical and involved a thorough reorientation of views on God's grace and character,(16) as well as of the social system. Through these parables Jesus exhorted His listeners to attend the feast in God's Kingdom.

Every aspect of the above mentioned parables (Lk.14: 14: 15-24; 18: 9-14) depict the free and absolute nature of the father's forgiveness. This stands in stark contrast to the expectations of the listeners. Jesus alludes to the standpoint of the Pharisees in the figure of the elder son. (Lk.15: 11-32) The father in the parable extends the same gesture of love to his elder son as he does to his younger son. Indeed, we can compare this with Jesus' actions in eating not only with the marginals of society but also with the Pharisees.

The father in the parable is extraordinary and extravagant. The son is treated as an honoured guest. The father runs to meet his son. Even if he is in a great hurry, for an aged oriental it is beneath his dignity to run. He is kissed as a sign of forgiveness (2 Sam.14: 33); a kiss on the cheek is for an equal. A feast is prepared as a sign of rejoicing, forgiveness and reinstatement. The robe is a garment for an honoured guest; the ring is a symbol of authority; while the shoes (a luxury at the time) are the mark of a free man. He is not just accepted back, he is a celebrated and fêted guest.(17) The father has "shown him without a word that 'you are to be my son, in spite of all that has happened'."(18)

c) How Inclusive is the Kingdom?

God's forgiveness is further illustrated by the inclusiveness of the Kingdom. This fact is illustrated in the parables.

of the Lost Sheep, Coin and Son, and particularly in the story of the Great Banquet. Nobody is excluded from God's Kingdom except by his own choice "God's mercy can be forfeited ..... and God's table does not remain empty".(19) For Jesus included tax-collector, sinner, harlot, cripple, blind, poor and prodigal sons. But the church attracted persons of high social rank too, even Christian Pharisees.(see Acts 15: cf.Phil.3: 5)(20) This social variety caused social tensions from the outset. In the Corinthian letters we can already see the problems of class distinctions within the church.(See 1 Cor.11)

But Jesus' message was that all the differences that dominated the social world have been eliminated or transcended in the New Covenant community. These differences included sexual, ethnic, traditional-religious, social and economic barriers. Not only the proselyte, but any person, was welcome in this inclusive people of God.(cf.Col.3: 11)

Nevertheless it does not need a study of psychological or sociological considerations to realise that Jesus' message (cf.Mt.20: 16) would have a special appeal to people whose social experience was that of being last. Jesus offers a "replacement of this world order with a totally different one, in which those who are have-nots become the haves".(21) (cf.Lk.16: 19-31; 18: 9-14)

For in many of the parables Jesus reduces the complexities of society to a series of opposites, for example: poor-rich (see Lk.14: 15f; 16: 19f), good-evil (16: 19-31; 20: 9-18), pious-hypocrite (18: 9f; 15: 11-33; 18: 1-8) and elect-damned.(16: 19f; 18: 9f: cf.15: 1-33; 14: 15f) A story-telling technique obviously involves exaggerating and idealising. Gager writing about the New Testament



statements on poverty says "the ideology of poverty does more than simply mirror social reality. It exaggerates and idealizes this reality".(22) Such exaggeration is necessary in order to make a point effectively.

The threads that connect the parables of Jesus with the situation of His day are numerous. We can see His actions mirrored in His parables. However, in many cases the links are allusions to a particular social reality, rather than absolute identification. In the parable of the Great Banquet, for example, the host searches in the streets and alleys for guests. Many of Jesus' audience and table-companions could identify with the "replacement guests". The issue of Jesus' table-fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners 'surprises' those who expected to be guests at the Messianic Banquet. Jesus is proclaiming that the Banquet has begun. He warns that anyone who is not willing to attend the first course, will not get to taste of the meal proper. When the host still has room at table after searching the streets, he sends for the vagrants in the highways and hedges. This can be seen as an allusion to the Gentile mission (see Rom.11), for the host declares, "I want my house to be full". The parable does, then, seem to explain how it could happen that Israel rejected Christ, while the Gentiles received the Gospel.(cf.Rom.9: 25; Lk.20: 9-18)

In his parables, Jesus combines criticisms of the old with a vision of the new. This is clearly seen in the parable of the Great Banquet. In all the parables we see Jesus teaching with authority and contrasting the old way of access to God with the new way He is proclaiming. He is a charismatic figure who articulates the hopes of disprivileged members

of the community and promises a new social world.

d) What was Jesus' Challenge?

As we have seen, the Kingdom of God was often pictured as a Great Supper.(14: 1-24; 15: 11-33) This made Jesus' table-fellowship the more poignant. In the parable of the banquet Jesus calls for an immediate response from His listeners. The message was, now is the accepted time (cf.Lk.12: 54-56), tomorrow will be too late. Jesus proclaims "now is the hour of decision".

The excuses given by the guests in this parable are often understood as refusals, but Linnemann gives them the following interpretation, "since the excuses of the guests are not typical 'weak excuses' nor bear the character of a deliberate slight, Jesus' listeners will hardly have understood them as refusals, but as excuses for coming late..... the banquet will not run away".(23) Indeed, to a certain extent etiquette allowed for arriving late at a banquet, but latecomers sometimes lost their places.

In any case, the point of the parable is that they are risking this unique opportunity of a place at the table of God. They thought there was still time, but now is the acceptable time. So Jesus presented Palestinian Judaism with a crisis of decision. He proclaimed the eschatological forgiveness of sins, and tax-collectors and sinners responded and accepted it. The joy of salvation was now available to those who had been alienated by Judaism. Jesus revealed the reality of God and His love in a new and decisive way to the marginals of society. But this new situation required that some "sacrificed principles and attitudes previously regarded as essential to the life of the community and its relationship

with God, and for this many were unprepared. The new wine was bursting the old wineskins.(24)(cf.Lk.13: 6-9; 14: 34-35; 20: 9-18)

### Conclusions.

- 1) Jesus' actions and parables are closely interlinked. For each parable has a setting in life and "every genuine parable is spoken from a community and for a community".(25) We can see the problems of the time reflected in the parables. Jesus in his table-fellowship presents acceptance and forgiveness to the outcast and sinner. While eating with the Pharisees, He vindicates His companionship with such in the form of parables by issuing a warning to His listener. In these parables the Lukan Jesus points out that the despised are God's concern, and hence His also.
- 2) Jesus' actions and parables point to the inclusiveness of God's Kingdom. Here is surely a social and theological pointer for the Lukan community. His church is to care about and rescue the lost children of God. They are to be theologically, if not sociologically, a unity under God's love. Jesus' message has enormous social repercussions for the community.
- 3) The question of Jesus' authority and identity is inherent in the parables. Jesus is the Messiah, who is able to decide who is included in the offer of salvation. But the invitation is issued now and requires an immediate response. The parables then further express Jesus' mission and message.
- 4) The Messianic banquet was certainly a motif of the Old Testament and of apocalyptic literature.(see chapter 2) In several Lukan parables we see Jesus using a banquet as a picture of the Kingdom. The guests at these parabolic banquets

are of great importance. In addition we realise the importance of the meal and table companionship in the age in which Jesus lived. Alongside this we have the Lukan accounts of Jesus' earthly meals. Only when all these threads are woven together do we have a clear understanding of Jesus' meals in Luke. The parables are clearly an important part of our interpretation.

Footnotes.      Parables.

- (1) See J. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, p.227.
- (2) E. Linnemann, Parables of Jesus, p.19.
- (3) J. Jeremias, op.cit. pp.124-131.
- (4) G. Theissen, The First Followers of Jesus.
- (5) J. Elliott, "Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: More on Methods and Models". Semeia 35, 1986, pp.1-33.  
See also B. Malina, The New Testament World. Insights From Cultural Anthropology.
- (6) P. Berger, The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. p.3.
- (7) See E. Linnemann, op.cit. p.74.
- (8) H.C. Kee, Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective,
- (9) See table in J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, p.304. Note that Jeremias' evidence is largely culled from later Rabbinic sources.
- (10) C.H. Dodd, Parables of the Kingdom, p.123.
- (11) See K. Bornhauser, Studien zum Sondergut des Lukas, p.132.  
H. Strack and P. Billerbeck II, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, p.211 quotes Sukka 5: 4 to show the Pharisees accepted penitents.  
The legend of Nahum of Gimso also shows the Pharisees took repentance seriously. See E. Linnemann, op.cit. pp.71-73.  
Cf. also E.P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, p.443.
- (12) E. Linnemann, ibid. p.71.
- (13) E.P. Sanders, op.cit. p.207.
- (14) G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth. But note E.P. Sanders' sharp critique of the kind of problem represented by Bornkamm, especially in the way it portrays Judaism (eg. in appearing to deny "grace" to Judaism). See Jesus and Judaism, p.29f.
- (15) C.H. Dodd, op.cit. p.90.
- (16) See E.P. Sanders, op.cit. p.174f, p.245f.
- (17) For further details see E. Linnemann, op.cit. p.77.
- (18) K. Bornhäuser, op.cit. p.113.
- (19) G. Eichholz, Einführung in die Gleichnisse, p.64.
- (20) Pliny the Younger, Governor of the province of Asia Minor wrote to the Emperor Trajan about AD.112 and asks for instructions on the way to deal with Christians. He mentions the social variety of Christianity.

In the first century the social structure was rigid with legally defined classes. It became more fluid by the fourth century as the structure of the Empire crumbled, (this started at the end of the second century) and Christianity became a major force.

(21) P. Henry, New Directions in New Testament Study, p.185.

(22) J. Gager, Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity, p.28.

(23) op.cit. p.89.

(24) N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, p.97.

(25) E. Fuchs, Introduction to Parables of Jesus, by E. Linnemann, pp.XI.

Chapter 7. Meals in Acts.

A study of the importance of the meal in Luke's Gospel would be incomplete without some mention of the Book of Acts. We therefore propose to study possible links between Luke and Acts in the area of table-fellowship. We also intend to examine the importance of the meal in Acts and inquire into any possible progression of concept regarding the meal.

a) The Importance of the Meal in Acts.

Mealtimes, food and the breaking of bread are mentioned many times in the Book of Acts (1: 4; 2: 46; 9: 9; 10: 13f; 10: 41; 11: 3f; 10: 41; 11: 3f; 15; 20: 7f)(1). In these texts we note that Jesus' eating in His resurrected state is part of the early creed, and proof of the resurrection(eg.1: 4; 10: 4).(2) (cf.Luke 24: 30f, 41-43) In addition we see that the breaking of bread is part of the church community's worshipping life. Christians took fellowship meals in each other's homes and broke the bread. In other passages it becomes clear that food and table-fellowship were important issues for the early church or Lukan community. Indeed such matters were of overriding concern. Many passages are concerned with the spiritual and sociological issues of suitable table companions for the Christian.

The main thrust of the material concerned with table-fellowship is that relating to whether Christians should eat with Gentiles. This, it would seem, was a major, and sensitive, area of debate in the first century. The extensive material on the subject in Acts (10: 1-48; 11: 3-18; 15: 1-11) backs this up. This can be further supported by Pauline material, relating to this and connected issues (see 1 Cor. 11: 17-34; 1 Cor.8, 10; Rom.14; Gal.2: 11f). In Cor.11: 17-34, how the Lord's Supper should be conducted is discussed at length, while in Galatians 2 Paul examines the relationship between Jew and Gentile.

Luke also attaches great importance to the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1-11). As F. F. Bruce states, "It is as epoch-making, in his eyes, as the conversion of Paul or the preaching of the Gospel to Cornelius and his household" (3). It is at this council that the relationship between Jew and Gentile is discussed. This relationship had strong bearings on the spiritual and sociological issues connected with table-fellowship.

As we have seen the relationship between Jew and Gentile was neither solely spiritual nor solely sociological. The Jews carefully guarded their social boundaries. As Mary Douglas writes, "The human body is always treated as a mirror of society" (4). This principle can be illustrated by the purity laws adhered to by the Pharisees or Qumran. These purity laws meant tight social boundaries which excluded the Gentile. In addition many societies or associations in the Ancient World were socially homogeneous. (5)

When members of a differing social standing did meet to share a common meal, marked stratification was displayed. This can be gleaned from Pliny (Epistulae 11.6) when such an issue is discussed. Those with the highest social standing were offered the best quality food and wine.(6)

Similar strife is recorded within the Christian community at Corinth (see 1 Cor.11. Also Gal.2; Acts 11: 15). The Lord's Supper, a basis for unity in a community of love, had become an occasion for demonstrating social differences. No doubt within the Lukan community too there were quarrels, within a congregation that was socially, as well as theologically, conditioned (See Acts 6: 1-7).

The status of the Gentile within Christianity, and his position at table, was an issue. And as Theissen writes, "It is to be expected that many of the theological ideas of those who are party



to these conflicts express an interest in shaping social relationships or have social functions beyond their more immediate intention".(7) Perhaps the Lukan community, several years on, was encountering a recurrence of similar social and spiritual views. For Christianity, it seems, stood alone in expecting heterogeneity among its members.(8) Luke was no doubt aware of the difficulties of balancing social decorum and theological notions. For the Christian community had to balance class - specific expectations and normal social behaviour, on one hand, with the beliefs of a community of love on the other.

So how does Luke tackle the issue? Luke, we notice immediately, relates Peter's vision at Joppa twice, at length (Acts 10: 1-48; 11: 3-18). Martin Dibelius, however, writes of this episode, "In the story itself (the conversion of Cornelius) this act of eating does not play an essential part at all.(9) This opinion is surely inaccurate. For what is Peter criticized later? (Acts 11: 1-3) He is called before the Apostles and Judean brethren, who have heard that the Gentiles have received the word of God. The circumcision party criticize Peter saying, "Why do you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"

Indeed, Peter's behaviour is regarded as so revolutionary, in that he has entered and eaten in a Gentile house, that the news reaches Jerusalem before Peter does. He is not asked to defend himself for preaching the Gospel. Indeed, Philip has preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, while Paul is seen converting Gentiles. Cornelius is even described as "a devout man, gave alms liberally, prayed constantly".(Acts 10: 2) The heinous offence Peter is guilty of is not that he preached or even baptized, but that he has associated with Gentiles and sat at their table. Gentiles, even those converted, ate unclean food and were uncircumcised, and were therefore out of the covenant relationship with God.(10)

The problem of table-fellowship with non-Jews was an acute one. For "centuries of devotion to the laws governing food and purity had bred in them an instinctive revulsion from eating with Gentiles which could not be overcome."(11) Indeed F. F. Bruce (12) feels that the issue was so important for the Judaizers that it explains the sudden unpopularity of the Apostles with many Jews who had previously respected them. The Apostles became targets of attack.

I. H. Marshall, however, dismisses the issue of Acts 11: 1-3 as unimportant, due to the fact the criticism is raised by the "circumcision party" and "not felt by everybody."(13) The point presumably is that the circumcision and kishruth question are bound up together as part of the same outlook. The weight of references point to the problem as a major one, and this reference to the "circumcision party" may be regarded as a narrative device.

The thread running through the episode is eating. The link between Peter's vision and his subsequent meeting with the Gentile Cornelius, and his household, is the eating. It is this that makes the whole narrative coherent. For first there is the vision, followed by table-fellowship and finally the question by the circumcision party. The result of the vision is that barriers, both social and theological, have been broken down (cf. Lk 5: 27f; 19). Although nothing can be said to counter Peter's argument or experience, it seems that a problem still remained (see Acts 15: 1-21, Gal.2).

As we would expect from the narrative of Acts 10, Peter was happy to share a table with Gentile Christians. Nothing was to be considered common or unclean (cf. Mk.7: 19). This lesson was immediately put into practice at the house of Cornelius. But at Antioch, visitors from Judaea conveyed a message (14) to Peter from James and the Judaeans Christians. The abrogation of the levitical

food laws and the eating of food which had been "contaminated" by idolatrous associations was offensive to Jewish Christians and an obstacle to commanding the respect or attention of Jews whom they wished to convert. Peter was impressed by the visitors' representations. He withdrew from table-fellowship with Gentiles, recognising that others were not so emancipated as he. (cf. 1 Cor. 6: 12f) If Peter was concerned about the effect of his actions on those in Jerusalem, Paul was concerned about the reaction Peter's withdrawal would have on Gentile Christians. We read of his views in Galatians 2. He refers to their actions as "play-acting" (ὕποκρισις). They had no scruples about eating with Gentiles; their personal convictions were that table-fellowships with Gentiles was acceptable, but inexpedient. Paul saw that the unity of the Christian community was in danger if they were unable to break bread together and participate in social intercourse. As F. F. Bruce states, "Peter's concession, well-meant as it was, would prove the thin end of the wedge; refusal to share a common table with uncircumcised believers might be followed ere long by refusal to acknowledge them as believers at all or to recognize them as fellow-members of the church".(14)

As Acts 15 tells us, the Council of Jerusalem decreed that the Gentiles need not be circumcised, but should abstain from three major offences - idolatry, fornication and bloodshed. In this way two important questions were dealt with -

- 1) Must Gentile Christians be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law?
- 2) What are the conditions which Gentile Christians should comply with if Jewish Christians are to have easy social relations with them?

As the first question was answered negatively, the second needed to be raised. If question one had been answered in the affirmative

table-fellowship would automatically have followed. So at the Council in Jerusalem a practical *modus vivendi* is worked out, in order to smooth the path of table-fellowship, between two groups of people from opposite backgrounds. So despite Peter's objections that they should not be burdened with the yoke of the law and that grace is sufficient, guidelines are laid down (Acts 15: 20).

In addition to the issue of table-fellowship with Gentiles, Acts may be read as a collection of guest and host stories. Many individuals are reported for their exemplary hospitality to Peter, Paul, Barnabas and so on. For example hospitality is given by Judas (9: 11), Simon (9: 43, 10: 6), Mary (12: 12), Jason (17: 5-9), Titus Justus (18: 7), Mnason (21: 16), Julius (27: 1-3), Publius (28: 1-10), Cornelius (10-11), Sergius Paulus (13: 7-12), Lydia (16: 14-15, 40), and the jailer of Philippi (16: 25-34), Priscilla and Aquila (18: 1-4) and Philip (21: 8-14).

Although Peter and Paul are portrayed mostly as guests, we also see them in the role of host, (10: 1-48; 20: 7-12, 17-33; 16: 25-32; 27: 21-36; 28: 17, 30-31). Throughout Acts then the guest-host motif is important and many references to it can be found. Again the sheer quantity of evidence for Luke's regular accentuation of guest and host roles in Acts suggests that the matter is more than peripheral to his concern.

The meal, table-fellowship and hospitality are pictured as catalysts for creating and sustaining partnerships in the Gospel. Indeed, Minear has proposed that the Luke "table-fellowship as interpreted by table talk constituted the Gospel". (15) Luke does appear to forge deep links in his two volume work between the verbal content of the Gospel and its historical embodiment in situations involving guests and hosts.

This leads us on to discuss -

b) The Link Between Luke and Acts.

The most obvious point of connection is the mention of Jesus's resurrection meals in both Gospel (Lk.24: 14-35; 40-43) and Acts (1: 4; 10: 41). Jesus receives his full identity in these meals, He is the risen Messiah. The proof of His resurrected body is given in the breaking of bread and eating of fish.

There are, we feel, less obvious links. The issue of table-fellowship is, as we have seen, one of the major facets of Luke's portrayal of the early Church. It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that in his Gospel, Luke's interest and emphasis on the meals Jesus ate was connected to the ecclesiastical problems.

We have seen that table-fellowship had theological, social and anthropological dimensions. Luke's portrayal of Jesus at table with Pharisees, for example, can be compared with the questions of the circumcision party (Acts 11: 1-3); the meals with disciples and followers in the Gospel can be linked with Acts 2: 46: Acts 11: 3; but perhaps the most astonishing part of the Gospel is Jesus' association with tax-collectors and sinners. We can couple this with the tension caused by the Cornelius episode. Jesus is then pictured as seeking the lost and visiting the sick(16) in both his actions and parabolic teaching.

In the Gospel of Luke we see Jesus as a model in the guest-host stories, whereas in Acts Paul is often the primary model. We see that meals and hospitality have a central place in the proclamation of the good news by Jesus and by Paul. It would seem the meal was portrayed as important in Paul's ministry only two or three decades after his death.(see Acts 27: 13-36; 28: 16-31) Indeed for both Paul and Jesus hospitality provides a hermeneutical key to the proclamation, as portrayed by Luke.

The actions and teachings of Jesus are directed by Luke as an answer to the problems of the early Church. This answer supplies the Lukan community with both a theological and social solution. For example, if Jesus ate with tax-collectors and sinners, i.e. those out of a covenant relationship with God, the unclean, as was the Gentile, couldn't the Christian do the same? Luke refers back to and emphasises the actions of Jesus (cf. also Mk. 2: 13f: Mt. 9: 9-13). Jesus is also seen to disregard social etiquette and abandon ceremonial food laws. Is it not the case that Luke's forms, narratives and emphases have been shaped by the theological and social problems of his community? With such considerations in his mind Luke has attempted to give some solution through his portrayal of the life of Christ.

After Christ's resurrection we see His followers taking up their Master's table ministry and becoming hosts of the Kingdom themselves. The portrayal of the early Church in Acts is one where hospitality is possible, even normative. Hospitality is something that stimulates the creation of partnerships not generally thought to be possible (e.g. Luke 5: 27f: 19: 1f: Acts 10-11). Effective participation in God's mission in the Graeco-Roman world involves hospitality, whether it be in a house, church, community, or the giving of hospitality to itinerant prophets.

c) Is there a Progression in the "meal-concept"?

Is there any progression of thought in the concept Luke presents us with of table-fellowship in Luke-Acts? We believe there is.

Before discussing this point it is necessary to be convinced that hospitality is a major and distinctive theme of Luke's. We have already noted the sheer quantity of references to meals, meal settings and hospitality in the two volumes. However, there are

other important themes in Luke-Acts such as the contribution of women, the use of material possessions, a care for the poor and outcast and the validity of God's covenant. Is Luke's interest in meals one subtheme among many? The volume of references would seem to suggest the whole matter is more than peripheral. It is our belief that throughout Luke-Acts the proclamation of the Gospel is portrayed hand in hand with meal settings. It is through the interaction of guests and hosts that the word of the Lord is spoken. This is a constant theme. Certainly Luke had multiple intentions, but our theme is accentuated by the number of references and the use of language implying hospitality.

Sverre Aalen emphasises that for Jesus the Kingdom is "a community, a house, an area where the goods of salvation are available and received .... even a meal or feast ....." (17) We have indeed seen Jesus in Luke behaving as though the Kingdom is being offered through his ministry. Furthermore the earliest versions of the Lord's Prayer (see Lk. 11: 2-3) seem to link the Kingdom and the request for bread.(18) "For Jesus wishes his disciples to focus on meal settings in the present age as occasions for the Kingdom's power".(19) In Acts this concept is modelled particularly by Paul.

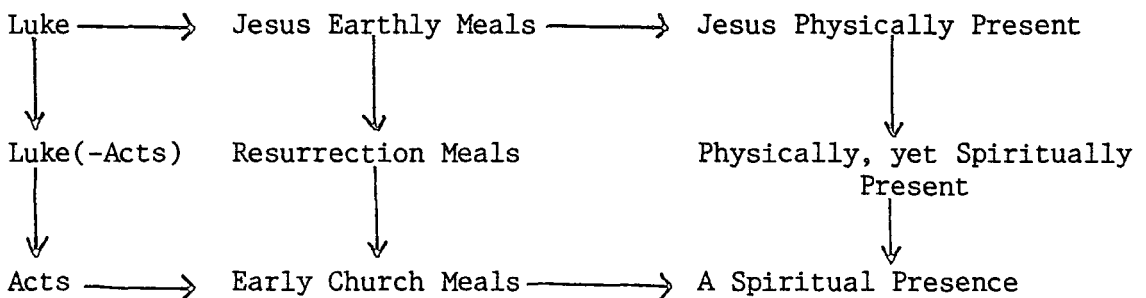
So the concept is important, but is there a progression of thought? We have noted how Jesus ate meals with various groups of people in His earthly life. At such meals He was physically present. Amidst misunderstanding He gradually revealed His identity and teaching, challenging His table companions. The final earthly meal was the Last Supper. No pagan, cultic, Pharisaic, Passover or Qumran meal seems to fit exactly the pattern of this meal. Rather it was a continuation of the practice that had been part of Jesus and His disciples' life together.

The next meals narrated are resurrection meals, where Jesus,

although physically present, often goes unrecognised and miraculously disappears. These meals can be seen as the climax of the earthly meals, when the disciples encounter the true identity of their Risen Messiah. In His actions He assures them of His continued presence at the meal table. In the breaking of bread and drinking of wine His followers are given by Jesus the only ordinance for the future, "do this in remembrance of me".

These resurrection meals, as we have seen, are referred to in Acts (1: 4; 10: 41). Luke then goes on to mention the table-fellowship of the early Church and its problems. At these meals Jesus is spiritually present in the breaking of bread. In each meal the identity of Jesus and the idea of misunderstanding are constant themes.

The above series of ideas can be represented diagrammatically -



The disciples and followers of Jesus reach their "final" earthly relationship with Jesus through the medium of the meal. He is God, spiritually present with them. They have learnt a lot about His identity and purpose by the conclusion. The final relationship will be realised at the eschatological banquet. This is illustrated in the parabolic teaching.

Conclusions.

It is, then, possible to see strong links between Luke and Acts in the area of table-fellowship. More than this, there is a progression of ideas, giving a unity to Luke-Acts.

We can see several constant themes -

- a) There is the question of Jesus' identity and the disciples



relationship with Him.

b) There is the constant note of misunderstanding, a reminder of weakness and humanity.

c) The offer of salvation is present at each meal. This goes alongside forgiveness and acceptance. (see Lk.5: 27; 31-32; Lk.19: 10; Acts 1: 3) The Kingdom is partnered with hospitality. The offer is made by Jesus in Luke and the gospel is proclaimed by Paul and others in Acts. So we see a special unity between ministries of the word and ministries of the table. (eg. Act. 10-11; 28: 32)

d) Meals in both volumes have links with joyful repentance (eg. Luke 5: 27f; 19: 1f; Acts 9: 17-19; 10: 44)

e) Each meal table shows Jesus as an authoritative figure. He is able to stand above social conventions and purity codes. He is able to forgive sins, triumph over death and break down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. Paul continues to fight these conventions in Acts.

f) Present in each meal encounter are the social dynamics of the situation. Jesus eats with tax-collectors, sinners, women, He eats with religious establishment, but the entry of a woman of ill-repute (2<sup>o</sup>) provides an opportunity to challenge their social code. His own disciples include a social mix of tax-collector, Zealot and fisherman. In Acts, Peter's encounter with Cornelius the Gentile challenges further the social stance of the day.

At the start of each of his books, Luke warns us of the social challenge. In Luke 4: 16-22, Luke proclaims in the words of Isaiah 61 that He has come to proclaim liberty to the captives and oppressed. Luke 24: 47 and Acts 1: 8 show the scope of Jesus' mission, it is to be "to the ends of the earth". Luke 19: 10 tells us the son of Man has come to seek and save the lost.

In Luke we see Jesus mixing with society's rejects, giving status to the downtrodden. He even admires the faith of a Gentile (Lk.7: 1-10). In the Song of Simeon we catch a glimpse of His revelation to the Gentiles (Lk.2: 32) to be fulfilled in Acts. His is a mission to the lost as His parables make clear. Luke-Acts displays the social dimension of Luke's community; a socially diverse group striving to achieve unity. We also see a spirit of ecumenicity and the attempt "to bring together in co-operation and mutual understanding if not common conviction, persons of differing theological outlooks .....".(21)

We can see then that many of the other themes of Luke, concern for the outcast, women and the use of material possessions, are closely associated with meals and hospitality. It is our theme that holds other distinctive Lukan motifs together.

g) Each meal episode in Luke-Acts then offers its reader a theological and social challenge. The reader is invited to further his faith as the identity of the Messiah is gradually revealed. He is also challenged to put Christ before social, behavioural and religious expectations or status.

Footnotes.    Acts.

(1) There seems to be links here between the meal-time and God's saving power. Acts 27: 33-36. Also see 9: 9.

(2) We note the use of  $\sigma\upsilon\nu\alpha\lambda\iota\zeta\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (Acts 1: 4). This is a rare word meaning, "consuming together", "consume together the proverbial salt", "live in close companionship with ....", "to eat together", "assemble", come together, have table-fellowship" (see Ezra 4: 14). It probably reflects the use of the rare Hebrew word  $\square \bar{\eta} \bar{\nu}$ , to signify a very special type of fellowship He was enjoying with His disciples. See Max Wilcox, The Semitisms of Acts, pp.106-9.

(3) F.F. Bruce, The Book of Acts, p.298.

(4) Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology, (2nd edtn.) Barrie & Jenkins, London, p.98.

(5) See chapter 2 of this thesis.

(6) For further discussion see - Martial in Epigrammata, III, 60. Here all the guests were raised to the status of the highest one. Martial in Epigrammati, I, 20. Caecilianus the host, alone eats the quality fare. He demonstrates before all his social superiority. Juvenal's description of Virro's banquet in Saturas V, describes in detail the violent squabble that breaks out because the host had superior food.

(7) G. Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, pp.146-7.

(8) "(Christians) were probably marked off from other unofficial associations, which were generally socially and economically as homogenous as possible", E.A. Judge. The Social Pattern of Christian Groups

(9) Martin Dibelius, Studies in the Acts of the Apostles, p.109f.

(10) Kishruth distinction.

(11) F.F. Bruce, New Testament History, p.286.

(12) ibid. p.261.

(13) I.H. Marshall, The Acts of the Apostles.

(14) F.F. Bruce, op.cit. p.285.

(15) P. Minear, Commands of Christ: Authority and Implications, p.180.

(16) It is interesting to note that many of Jesus' healings also restore isolated individuals to communities, eg. leprosy, demon-possessed, chronic haemorrhage, paralysis, epilepsy, death and coma.

(17) Sverre Aalen, "Reign and House in the Kingdom of God in

the Gospels", N.T.S. 8 (1962), pp.224-25.

(18) See J. Jeremias, The Lord's Prayer, p.17.

(19) J. Koenig, New Testament Hospitality, p.45.

(20) We may view prostitution as a parody of the guest-host relationship.

(21) H.C. Kee, Christian Origins in Sociological Perspective, p.148.

Chapter 8. Lukan Meals: A Social and Religious Challenge.

We have seen that the Lukan meals have considerable significance attached to them, and are fraught with social and religious meaning. This significance cannot be narrowed down to one area, but is multifaceted. In addition we have argued and attempted to show that the importance of the Lukan meals is not as inextricably bound up with the Last Supper as has hitherto been maintained. We have also argued that the meals are not simply of theological interest, but are socially revolutionary as well.

The schematic location of the meal setting in Luke and Acts indicates the importance of this setting as a vehicle for the Lukan message. Instances of this permeate the Gospel: they are found at its close, and at the beginning of Acts and there is also mention in the case of Peter in the middle of Luke's second volume. It would seem that the meal setting was not merely a literary device, but a dramatization of God's saving grace. Jesus' kerygma was translated into action.

The world in which Jesus ate was one in which the idea of hospitality and etiquette was well-developed and important. Further, one's dinner guests or companions reflected on one's own prestige and standing within the community. This was within a society where boundaries between people were clearly demarcated. A sharp line was drawn between Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean, male and female, parent and child. Important were "the requirements of formal politeness, the elaborate etiquette of an unhurried world, but also constant recognition of status and personal worth was required and emotional reactions could be expected if one fell short in

that regard".(1) Such sharp lines between social relationships in Palestinian Jewish society inevitably led to tensions and aggression. Stringent categories meant people such as foreigners, tax-collectors, sinners and finally Jesus were not acceptable socially or theologically. The theological and sociological aspects of society were inextricably bound up with each other. Jesus' religious stance had vast social and behavioural repercussions and vice-versa. Jesus' actions and the corresponding reactions are only intelligible when placed in this socio-historical context.

When Jesus shared a table with tax-collectors and sinners, yet proclaimed the Kingdom of God, He crossed traditional boundaries. Identifiable situations, norms and expectations were challenged. He set up a new taxonomy for religious and social life. This table-fellowship, most meaningful to His followers, was most offensive to His critics. For the tax-collector was culturally, religiously and socially raised by table-fellowship with Christ, whereas by the same action the Pharisee lost social status, religious prestige and authority. It is probably true to say that nothing in Jesus' career was so thoroughly misconstrued as the issue of His table-fellowship.

Jesus' table-fellowship, offered in the name of God, was an outrage. It was seen as a deliberate offence against the status quo. Jesus' actions threatened the social and religious fabric, so much that they were in part responsible for His death on the cross.

Jesus, as we have already noted, offered unconditional forgiveness in His actions. In doing this, He reversed the values and expectations of His cultural society.(2)

To have talked to a sinner and gained his repentance through the expected channels would have been no crime, but Jesus sat at table with those who had not demonstrated their repentance in the normal sacrificial way. This shocked the religious establishment and put His own standing in jeopardy. The Jesus of Luke, and the other Gospels is a nonconformist. He is constantly criticized for His failure to conform to the expected pattern. He was, in the opinion of the people of His day, extremely unconventional. This is seen plainly in His table-fellowship with sinners and His lack of fasting. Although He explains His behaviour, often by way of parables, His answers seem always to have been misunderstood and so also were His actions.

His actions and claims were seen to be extreme and absolute, and the authority He claimed was supreme. Jesus did not advocate moderations.(cf.Lk.21: 2; Lk.5: 27f; Lk.6: 1-5; Lk.9). His authority was interpreted by the Pharisees and His critics as bigotry. His claims to alter accepted social and religious behaviour and forgive sins were regarded as extravagant. His apparent fanaticism was seen as dangerous.

Jesus broke down social barriers, and preconceived notions about God and holiness were laid to waste. Indeed, Jesus had eschatological horizons, He brought in the New Age. This is indicated by many of the Lukan parables. (Lk.12: 13-21; Lk.14: 15-24; Lk.18)

In addition a challenge was laid at the door of the Temple(3) and its cult. Jesus offered unconditional forgiveness to the sinner without the usual mechanisms of forgiveness. The distinctions of clean and unclean were challenged, as was the position of women(4), the authority of the Pharisees

and the usual rules of social ostracism for certain groups.

Jesus' table-fellowship was marked by an openness that can be contrasted with the contemporary table-fellowship, which was characterized by exclusivism. Christ sat at table not only with the sinner, but also with the Pharisee. To them too He took His offer of salvation. He spoke to them in parables, both acted and spoken. His actions were complementary to His words. However, His methods proved to be a "stumbling block" to the majority of the Pharisees. (see Acts 15)

This point can be illustrated by the parable of the Prodigal Son. The elder brother was convinced his father should have acted in a different way and he did not understand the father's reaction to the prodigal son. So also the Pharisees were convinced the Messiah would not seek out, save and eat with sinners. But as the father in the parable stood outside the banqueting hall and pleaded with the elder son, so Jesus tried to reach the Pharisees and ate with them. Although the reader may have a certain sympathy with the elder son, the point is that the father does not conform to a commonly-held definition. For His love knows no boundaries, social, religious, moral or man-made.

We see then that the perspectives and standpoints of different people lead them to see the same action in a different light. The sinner and the younger son rejoice in God's mercy, while the Pharisee and older son grumble and murmur.

The parables emphasise the crisis of invitation. (cf. Lk. 14: 16-24) They extend the meal and the concept of table-fellowship metaphorically and eschatologically. The Old Testament motif of banqueting and feasting in the end-times is



picked up by Luke. The question of the Kingdom of God is full of sayings concerning meals, eating and drinking, hungering and thirsting and banqueting at the messianic table. For the banquet was the epitome of happiness, compared with the sparse diet and economically rigidly limited lives of the majority. Unexpectedly we find that those originally invited to the banquet turn down the invitation, while others, who expected to be disappointed, accept.

Jesus' invitation is not one-sided. All are invited, but not all accept. A warning is issued to the reader, and so also is a challenge to decide. We see in all these meal references, "the pattern of divine promise offered amidst human sin and weakness".(5)

In proclaiming the Kingdom of God through his table-fellowship Jesus dispensed with and rejected many conventional associations concerning the nature of God and His Kingdom. A challenge to the conventions of the time was issued, and it was one that opened new vistas in the religio-social world. It was a challenge to base the new community "not on tightly structured internal and external boundaries, but on an internal dynamic and discipline rooted in God's forgiving and accepting love".(6)

For the motifs of reconciliation and revelation are strongly attested in the meals. Indeed such motifs had long been associated with the meal. For example Jehoiachin was brought by the King of Babylon from prison to the royal table, as a public sign of rehabilitation.(2 Kings 25: 27-30; Jer.52: 31-34) Agrippa I had Silas, who was out of favour, brought to his table as a sign of forgiveness.(Josephus Ant.19.32.1) Jesus' meals are no mere socializing, but acts of redemption;

as the εἰς μετάνοιαν of Luke 5: 32 indicates.

And yet, although redemption and salvation are to be met "now" in the person of Jesus, there is still the sense of "not yet". The eschatological drama has still to reach its ultimate fulfilment and the Messianic banquet to be realized. So although there is the element of a future reward, yet there is the sense of a present reality.

Jesus not only ate with the extremes of sinners and Pharisees, He ate with His own followers and disciples. Even these misunderstood His mission and identity. The negative trait of the meal is ever-present, as is the pressing question, "Who is this man?"

The hostile and suspicious Pharisees misunderstood the meals with outcasts, the 5,000 don't realize what resources are available, Martha is too distracted to give the Bridegroom her full attention, despite the honour accorded to her; the Last Supper is overshadowed by Judas' betrayal, Peter's imminent denial and the discussion about greatness, and at Emmaus the disciples are spiritually and 'mentally' blind.

Even within the circle of Jesus' followers the limitations of human weakness are ever present. But gradually Jesus' identity is revealed. He is not John the Baptist or Elijah, He is not just a prophet or a glutton and drunkard. He forgives sins, has authority over the Sabbath, He is a teacher, a provider of nourishment, He offers salvation and His life, before He is finally revealed as the Risen Messiah.

The importance of the meal as a vehicle of revelation for the identity of Christ continues in Acts. Jesus continues to be known and exposed in the breaking of bread. As Jesus used the meal as a tangible expression of fellow-ship and

brotherhood, so the church continued to do so. The meal also had a social function in the society of the first century. The Christian meal was unlike others of its time, as it was a place where people of differing social strata could meet together. At a time when others met in homogenous groups, the Christians' table-fellowship was hallmarked by heterogeneity. The continuity of the meal references in Acts is seen at the outset with the word  $\sigma\upsilon\nu\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  .(1: 4)

For the early church the Gentile mission enhanced the burning issue of table-fellowship and suitable table companions. Was the repentant outcast to be accepted into the life of the community? Luke in his Gospel answers the question in the accounts of Jesus' table-fellowship and the teaching about the nature of God to be found in the parables.(Lk.15: 2f)

Jesus in Luke is seen inviting an ever-widening circle of people to His table: Pharisees, sinners, women, disciples and followers. This is mirrored in Acts as the fellow-ship circle widens to include the former Pharisee Paul, Godfearers (Cornelius etc.) and outcasts. Eating together is the crucial and final test of social and religious acceptance.

In addition, as Jesus used the meal as an instrument for His mission, so does the early church. Hospitality was an important factor in the Gospel's transmission, many hosts are named, such as Simon the Tanner, Lydia in Philippi, Prisca and Aquila in Corinth and Cornelius in Caesarea. This accounts for the acceptance and conversion of entire households. As E. Lohmeyer writes, "the meal is both metaphor and reality, both parable and event; it reveals in the word what the act adumbrates, and sets forth in the act what the word by implication promises".(7)

Throughout Luke's two volume work the leaders of the early church are made increasingly aware of the universal message. The meal, already a powerful medium in the ancient world, is given an extra dimension. Although rich with human significances, a new depth of content and meaning is provided. While these meals are often analogous to those of the contemporary world in form and practice, Jesus confronts us with a new and original phenomenon. The meals of Graeco-Judaism offer parallels, but not replicas and give us insight into descriptive formulae.

Finally, how do these meals fit in with the purpose of Luke-Acts? Five main reasons have been proposed:-

- a) To close the rift caused by an interecclesiastical controversy about the Gentile-Jewish situation.(Baur, Brandon, Trocme, Barrett, Talbert)
- b) An apology to the Roman State.(Easton)
- c) An evangelistic challenge to the Gentile world.(J.C.O'Neill)
- d) Church's need for an edifying proclamation, due to the delay of the Parousia.(Conzelmann)
- e) An apology for <sup>the</sup> Roman State.

These five reasons no doubt all contain an element of validity. Perhaps they need not be seen as mutually exclusive, but rather co-operatively illuminating. The delay of the Parousia required explanation and edifying proclamation. Due to the delay there was, it seems, the ecclesiastical controversy as to how to accommodate Jew and Gentile together in the Judaeo-Roman world, and therefore the corresponding need for an evangelistic challenge.

But surely Frank Stagg's explanation links these explanations in a convincing fashion. He states that the purpose

of Luke-Acts was "to show the expansion of a concept, the liberation of the Gospel as it breaks through barriers that are religious, racial and national".(8)

Such an explanation makes sense of the important motif and theology of the meal, as well as harnessing together alternative explanations. For surely Luke is concerned to show Jesus as a liberator, offering salvation to all. The tight restrictive barriers of religion and class are to be thrust aside in the community and fellow-ship of the New Age. This, says Luke, is the way forward. This is the message of His salvation-history.

In conclusion we see Christ offering salvation to the Pharisee and forgiveness and acceptance to the sinner. The Lukan Jesus' treatment of tax collectors is His answer to the spiritual and social "violence" shown to them by their contemporaries. The Lukan Jesus accepts the consequences of associating with the marginals of society, indeed this is part of His gospel. Luke emphasises the meal motif, but it is generally accepted that this goes back to the characteristics of Jesus and His ministry. So with the distinctively Lukan presentation of Jesus' table-fellowship we see Jesus challenging His followers to abandon socio-religious labelling and see that all men are invited and welcome to attend the heavenly banquet.

Footnotes. Lukan Meals: A Social and Religious Challenge.

- (1) J. Derrett, Jesus' Audience: The Social and Psychological Environment in Which He Worked, p.42.
- (2) See Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.
- (3) Compare The Cleaning of the Temple, Lk.19: 45-48.  
The Tearing of the Temple Veil, Lk.23: 45.
- (4) See J. Neusner, Judaism in Beginning of Christianity.  
The status of women, since the destruction of the Temple (AD.70) had been raised. For now the home was to be as pure as the Temple, and the women were responsible for enforcing the purity laws. pp.58-9.
- (5) I.H. Marshall, Luke,
- (6) J. Riches, Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism, p.110.
- (7) E. Lohmeyer, Lord of the Temple, p.80.
- (8) Frank Stagg, The Book of Acts: The Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel. p.12.

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