

Searching the Scriptures

Volume Two:
A Feminist Commentary

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The Gospel of Luke

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IT HAS BEEN ONE of the common truths of Christian Testament scholarship that Luke shows a particular interest in women.¹ Most relate this to the author's broader concern for the poor and the outcast, and some see it as an expression of his universalism. But the presence of women in Luke could also be an example of his emphasis on the success the Christian preaching had among the noble and well-off, since many of the women appear, in various ways, to be relatively resourceful.

Compared with other Christian Testament writings, the Gospel according to Luke contains more material about women. Most of this is in the specifically Lukan material. Since the material peculiar to Luke is so rich in traditions about women, it is all the more striking that the proportion of such material in Acts is much smaller than in the Gospel. This difference between the two volumes corresponds to a remarkable divergence in the present perception regarding the treatment of women by Luke: Is Luke within the Christian Testament corpus a rare friend of women reflecting equality and a radical revision of the role of women in the early church? Or is his major contribution to impose "the Lukan silence," representing a programmatic androcentrism that pleads the subordination of women in a more subtle and indirect manner than the direct parenetic enforcement of the letters? These are the extreme positions of an ambiguity that seems to be intrinsic to the Lukan construction in itself.

Luke's presentation is not a systematic treatise but a narrative. It tells a story and indicates a development by placing events in a certain sequence. This very simple fact has significant consequences for understanding the Lukan construction. Events, persons, and sayings receive meaning from their location and function in the sequence of the narrative. The order is therefore not arbitrary, and the location (or indeed relocation) of varying traditions in a narrative sequence can be an effective means of dealing with tensions and contradictions. This means that pieces cannot be picked from anyplace in the work

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and brought together to form a stable and unambiguous "Lukan" position. It may be that Luke has no coherent view of women. The narrative cannot be reduced to one fixed scene; it represents a complex movement and process. The narrative is in a special way a polyphony: it allows several and even contrapuntal voices to be heard in the course of events.

What follows is mainly an attempt at "reading Luke" while discerning patterns of gender in the Lukan composition. It is not a supplementary enterprise adding Luke's view of "woman" to a list of Lukan themes to make it more complete. By overcoming the gender blindness of most traditional studies and applying gender as an analytical category, interpreters are able to make women visible, which has a further effect in tracing patterns of gender as they develop in the story. It is like trying to discern in a weaving one of the warping threads through which the shuttle is pulled. In some places it may be more easily discerned than in others.

Gender, conceived as an analytical constant, has a biological basis in the fact that humans exist as women or men. But the difference between the sexes is further articulated in terms of culture and location in time and space. Gender differentiation and relationship will, no matter how they vary in their expressions, always have an all-embracing structural significance. In this widened feminist perspective it is necessary to investigate how differences and mutual dependence, sexual interplay and power structures are conceived. What follows is an attempt to make such an investigation in the case of Luke—still with special attention to the particular role of women.

My reading of Luke tries to understand the Lukan construction and does not aim at the reconstruction of another story or subtext using the Lukan text as a pretext. For the most part it ignores the history behind the Lukan screen and concentrates on the given text. This approach may, of course, be seen as lacking a certain feminist suspicion, but the rationale behind it is the wish and the need to see the full construction before deconstruction and reconstruction can take place. Therefore it may in the end, nevertheless, contribute to the further project of feminist rereadings of the story of Christian origins.

GENDER PAIRS: INCLUSIVENESS AND SEGREGATION

It has long been recognized that Luke has a tendency in his composition to generate doublets and parallels, and part of this parallel material is recognized as "gender pairs." These are not distributed in such a way that they can be attributed to or explained as deriving from a particular source.

As epic or narrative gender pairs (also as included in discourse material) the following should be identified:

Zechariah	Mary	Luke 1:11-20/26-38; 46-55/67-79
Simeon	Hannah	Luke 2:25-35/36-38
Naaman	Widow in Zarephath	Luke 4:27/25-26
Jairus's daughter	Widow's son	Luke 8:40-56/7:11-17
Jairus	Woman with issue of blood	Luke 8:40-41, 49-56/43-48
Men of Nineveh	Queen of Sheba	Luke 11:32/31
Man healed on sabbath	Woman healed on sabbath	Luke 14:1-6/13:10-17
Abraham's son	Abraham's daughter	Luke 19:9/13:16
Man sowed a seed	Woman hid yeast	Luke 13:18-19/20-21
Shepherd with sheep	Woman with coins	Luke 15:3-7/8-10
Men sleeping	Women grinding	Luke 17:34/35
Peter at tomb	Women at tomb	Luke 24:12/1-11

These epic pairs correspond to an explicit gender specification in many group and audience descriptions. Although the epic pairs are virtually nonexistent in Acts, there is some evidence for these coupled references. The double message in the parallel examples of women and men functions as an epic rejoinder to the description of the composition of the social group to whom the epic material is addressed or belongs. We are repeatedly informed that among those who follow Jesus (Luke 8:1-3; 23:49), are both women and men. The same applies almost stereotypically to the early communities of believers (Acts 1:13f.; 2:17f.; 8:3, 12; 9:2; 18:1-4; 21:8; 22:4), as well as various groups of audience (Acts 17:4, 12, 34; 24:24; 25:12, 23; 26:30). Apart from an instance in Acts 21:5 women are not simply added to strengthen the significance or magnitude of what occurs, as, for example, when Matthew, in the context of the multiplication of the loaves, adds "women and children" (14:21) to render the miracle even more spectacular. In these cases, the coupled combination is not "women and men," but the conventional pairing of "women and children," bearing the connotation of members of a minority and auxiliaries.

The gender-specified duality serves to include women in an explicit way. The presence of women is recognized even in contexts where a masculine terminology otherwise dominates, but the gender specification also serves to identify distance and segregation. Women and men belong to the same community; they are united by common rituals and live together in mutual material dependence. At the same time, men and women form groups of their own. This comes out very clearly when individual persons are given prominence on some occasions by being named. Luke then most often notes that they represent a larger group—so that the women named are referred to a group of women (Luke 8:2f.; 24:10) and the men to a group of men (Luke 8:51). The

community has inherent patterns of an organizational structure of gender division. A woman belongs to the larger community of faith primarily among the women, a man primarily among the men. This means that the whole community consists not primarily of individual members but of the group of men as well as the group of women.

There is no clear hierarchical order between the two groups. In the examples of the gender pairs, the rank of order is not consistent. Sometimes the example of the man comes first, and sometimes the example of the woman. Twice the grammatical construction emphasizes that the women constitute the core group of all those present. When compared with the earlier version in Mark, Luke's scene of the crucifixion (Luke 23:49) also names as present "all his acquaintances." This need not involve a minimalizing of the women's importance; it is rather an expression of the more general pattern of gender pairs, which has the effect in other passages of introducing a group of women (cf. Luke 8:1-3). It may also be that the linking "and" in Luke 23:27 and 49 has an emphatic meaning, so that the women in these cases are seen as special representatives of the greater group.

It is commonly assumed that the Lukan doublets are based on Jewish demands about the number of witnesses needed for their testimony to be considered trustworthy. As a guiding principle of composition, it should serve to strengthen the credibility of the account. But the epic gender pairs can only indirectly have any value as testimonials, and Luke's dealing with the credibility of women's testimony elsewhere is at best ambivalent. In keeping with this, messengers in Luke-Acts are often characterized explicitly as men, whether heavenly or earthly, and these men often appear in a group of at least two (see Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10; 9:38; 10:19f.; 15:22). In all these cases, the men's mission has the desired effect. On the few occasions on which women come with a message, they are not believed (Luke 24:10f. and Acts 12:14f.)—at least not by the group of men. The gender pairs in Luke cannot be explained simply as expressing a motif of "dual witness"—that is, in the traditional understanding of a minimum attestation of two witnesses in order to be able to claim credibility. Nevertheless, a dual witnessing in the sense of a duplication of testimonials to address an audience composed of men and women is still meaningful. It may be a literary device by which the author seeks to capture the attention of a mixed audience.

All the stories are integrated into one common text addressed to the whole of the community, but in the community the women were primarily named with the other women and the men with the other men. Despite the emphasis on a communal life, Luke-Acts mediates a picture of a world divided by gender, of a culture and a mediation of tradition in which men and women within the same community keep each to their own sphere of life.

it be that the positive and vigorous presentation of women in the Gospel makes it necessary to give a particular justification for the fact that they were not among those named as leaders of the Jerusalem community? There is a certain irony to this: those who de facto serve are not considered eligible for the service of leadership. The reversal not of roles but of role values coincides with and justifies a masculinization—from serving women to lords who are to be “as one who serves.”

THE REST IS SILENCE

In Luke 10:38–42 Jesus visits two sisters, Martha and Mary. Martha with her serving activity is set in contrast to her sister Mary, who listens in silence at the feet of the Lord. The two sisters are cast in roles that, without becoming caricatures, are almost stereotypes. This has encouraged interpretations of the two women primarily as symbols of various attitudes, forms of life or theological principles: for example, righteousness by works against righteousness by faith; Judaism against Christianity; the *vita activa* against the *vita contemplativa*; and so on. Not only do interpretations like this set aside any historical or literary understanding; they are also blind to the gender perspective.

Martha is the hostess who welcomes Jesus in her own home and provides whatever hospitality is required. This text is probably the oldest evidence of the Aramaic name Martha, a feminine form of *mar*, which means sovereign lady, ruling lady. In many ways, Martha is representative of a typical female figure in Luke-Acts. She is one of the number of relatively well-off and independent women who keep their own house and place it at the disposition of the community or of itinerant preachers.

Martha's role is repeatedly characterized by *diakon*-terminology in v. 40. Attempts to read the narrative in Luke 10:38–42 on a reconstructed subtext presupposing that its special and primary aim on Luke's part was to contest Martha's role of diaconal leadership, contain a number of sharp insights, especially into the portrait of Mary. But they are based on assumptions of a widespread and almost technical use of the *diakon*-terms, which is not well attested.

In the story, Martha plays the active role that drives the narrative forward; seen in this regard, she is the protagonist. Her activity is emphasized with vivid words, and her own words are related in direct speech, when she rebukes her sister's lack of practical activity. Mary's role in Luke 10:38–42 is passive; contrary to the active and outspoken Martha she listens in silence. Mary sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to his words is portrayed in the typical position of the pupil (cf. Acts 22:3). This description of a teacher-pupil relationship is an important feature of the text. The role as student in which Mary is positioned goes beyond the normal opportunity for women to hear the word in the con-

text of worship. Moreover, the text alludes to terms that in rabbinic tradition are connected to teaching institutions. It also echoes other sayings about "hearing the word" as the decisive criterion for discipleship directed to both women and men (see Luke 6:46ff.; 8:15, 21; 11:28).

Martha does not address Mary directly, but reproaches Jesus for his lack of interest in the unfair division of labor. She takes it for granted that priority belongs to the service she herself carries out, and she takes Jesus seriously to task because he does not see to it that Mary takes a part in the same service. The reproach uttered by Martha thus shows a certain set of priorities about what ought to be women's primary occupation. It is not, however, accepted by the Lord, even though it is formulated in such a way that it expects an affirmative answer. Martha's choice of words also refers continually back to herself. This intensifies the contrast to Mary's concentration on Jesus' words. But at the same time, Martha's appeal to Jesus implies that the relationship between host(ess) and guest is altered; even the hostess Martha operates with Jesus as the ultimate authority.

When Jesus rejects Martha's implicit demand that her sister should help, this is done by means of a two-sided argumentation. Negatively, it is said that Martha troubles and bustles about with many things. Positively, it is said that Mary has chosen the good part. The transition between the two descriptions of the women is mediated by the saying of Jesus about the one thing necessary. There are large text-critical problems about Jesus' answer in vv. 41f. The sensitive point seems to be "the need of one thing" (v. 42a), where the textual witnesses are divided among three quite distinct variants, two of which are very well attested: (1) "Few things, little, are necessary" (P38, P3, sy pal); (2) "Few things are necessary, or only one" (Nestle's text in earlier editions, and attested, e.g., by Sinaiticus and Vaticanus); (3) "One thing is necessary" (attested by the oldest papyri and the koine group). Among scholars there is a wide variety in the choice of which variant is to be preferred. The choice is influenced by the question whether Martha's activity totally can be dismissed as devoid of value and unnecessary. For those who cannot bring themselves to sweep Martha aside completely, the variants with "few things" are the most comfortable. Then something is said in Martha's favor; her mistake is simply that she bothers with much *more* than is necessary. A little, or only one thing, can suffice. Perhaps this refers to the number of courses to be laid on the table. Such an interpretation can in fact be said to be covered by all three variants, provided that "the one thing necessary" in v. 42a is not identified with "the good part" that Mary has chosen (v. 42b).

Jesus' reply to Martha concerns not her serving but the form it takes accompanied by trouble and agitation. It can thus be claimed that the fundamental antithesis is not between hearing and serving, but between hearing and agi-

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tated toil. What truly causes the problem is that Martha, in her agitated toil with so many things, demands her sister's assistance. From her own needs for help she intervenes in Mary's choice, and she even tries to ensure that Jesus supports this intervention of hers. So Martha represents a threat that Mary's part can be taken from her.

We should note that this is not portrayed as a conflict between men and women but as a conflict between two sisters. This is not a matter of a "divide and rule" strategy by putting woman up against woman. It is rather an illustration of how various and possibly conflicting roles for women may be balanced. The antagonism between the two sisters is provoked by Jesus' presence. But he is not the first to articulate the difference in the categories of conflict: Martha has this part. Jesus does indeed confirm the antithesis, but not in Martha's version. Instead, he rebukes Martha's toil and agitation, and defends the discipleship of Mary. It is, however, important that the priorities are established as the outcome of a situation of conflict of interests, in which Martha makes demands on Mary. Thus, the priorities are not necessarily absolute: the rejection of Martha's utterance comes unambiguously only when Jesus adds that Mary's good part is not to be taken from her. When there is a set priority among "the parts," these cannot be played off against one another. Devotion to the Word is given priority even where this may lead to conflict with the preoccupation that demands that one give support in provision, hospitality, and service.

Mary's passivity and silence raises, however, some further questions. Does the preference for Mary's choice mean that women's relationship to the word is to be defined primarily in terms of silence? Is the public modesty of the women in the healing stories part of a more consistent pattern? Are women who argue and speak up like Martha and the Syrophoenician woman in Mark (whom Luke omits) nothing but an embarrassment or offense? Are women to keep silent and not to speak, to listen and learn but not to teach? Does Luke represent an implicit variant of the same ideal as is explicit in 1 Tim 2:11f., where it emphatically is said that a woman shall let herself be taught in silence?

Even if there are similarities between Luke's portrayal of women and that of the Pastoral Letters, the differences too are obvious. In 1 Tim 2:11, the warning is not about women's access to instruction, but the author wishes to limit what he sees as improper consequences of this: they are to receive it in silence and in subordination. In Luke the sexually based functions are set aside in favor of the relationship to the word of God, and the women in Luke are noticeably independent. Women's choice of the word is a priority, even if it happens to be at the cost of the virtues for a woman's life valued so highly by the Pastoral Letters: the domestic life with husband and children. The decisive dissimilarity between the Pastoral Letters and Luke in these matters is to be found in their totally diverse attitude to marriage.

Neither is Mary in Luke 10:28–32 specifically portrayed as the ideal woman, but more generally as an ideal disciple. When the word of the Lord is proclaimed people should listen and receive. Early on in the Gospel, everyone has a listening role as recipients in a situation in which Jesus' proclamation dominates. So the preference for Mary also indicates that the real and primary host is Jesus himself providing his word. The deeper structure of the narrative in Luke 10:38–42 is therefore similar to that in 8:1–3—the service of Jesus comes first.

Nevertheless, limitations and restrictions are at work concerning women's exercise of the word also in Luke. The process of masculinization not only occurs through the transfer of the service terms, but is also reflected in an emerging difference between women's and men's relationship to the word. They all begin by listening to the words of the Lord. But while the male disciples may become public preachers, women are never given any explicit commission to preach. The criterion of maleness in Acts 1:21 excludes women from testifying to Jesus' resurrection, even if they otherwise satisfy the criteria of eligibility.

In the story of the empty tomb in Luke 24:1–10, it becomes clear how certain factors operate in silencing women. The peculiar Lukan version of this story may help to explain the remarkable gap between the Gospel's emphasis on the role of women on the one side and on the other side Acts' reduction of them to invisibility in favor of the healing and preaching activity of the leading men. By the use of almost ironic devices, the women become simultaneously recognized and rejected.

At the burial, Luke assigns to the women a more active role than does Mark. By including the women's preparations for the anointing of Jesus' body in the burial scene, Luke connects the narratives about the burial and the empty tomb more closely to one another so that they become one single sequence. The women do as much as they can as quickly as they can, without breaking the sabbath regulations. But even before sunrise they return to the tomb with the fragrant oils they have already prepared on the burial day itself. The women's service continues, and they undertake what was women's work, in Luke's story attended to by no one else. The women come to the tomb in order to continue their service, but the situation they encounter makes the preparations they have carried out inadequate and renders their practical concern and service unnecessary. It has been suggested that the women's role in the structure of the tomb narrative is intermediary. They are merely transient bearers of the news of the resurrection. The message with which they are sent away is not for the women themselves but for the male apostles. In relation to the content of the message, the women remain passive, without understanding—in fact, outsiders. The message is for the men, and the women are only "errand girls."

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It can indeed be claimed that in Luke the women run immediately to bring the male disciples the good news. But this is a spontaneous action on their part. No commission is given to the women to go and tell the disciples that Jesus is risen (as in Matt 28:7) and/or to tell them to meet him in Galilee (as in Mark 16:7 par. Matt 28:10). Instead, they are reminded of how Jesus told *them* that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and rise again on the third day (Luke 24:6–7). Thus the “errand girl” commission is replaced in Luke by a statement that focuses on the women’s own role as disciples in the Gospel story. They are asked to remember what he told them while he was still in Galilee, where they were together with him and listened to his word.

This explains why the characterization of the women as those following Jesus from Galilee is emphasized by being repeated twice in close sequence—Luke 23:49, 55. The retrospective reminder thereby makes sense. The summary notice in 8:1–3 is once more activated in the narrative, and the reference to the passion predictions in 24:7 imply that the women are counted among “the disciples” in 9:18ff. and 17:22ff. The exhortation to the women in 24:6 to remember what he had told them also echoes the various statements earlier in the Gospel about hearing the word and taking care of it (8:15, [21]; 11:28; 10:39).

The women’s role in Luke’s tomb narrative is thus not one of substitution. The women from Galilee are themselves the first addressees of the resurrection message in a way that confirms their discipleship and the instruction they have received as disciples. In this situation, their diaconal resources are not needed. Relevant is their relationship to the word of the Lord: they have listened to his words. In these words they have the resources that now may help to overcome their confusion and anxiety. They are asked to remember how he told them. The use of the verb “remember” combined with the word of the Lord in v. 6 and v. 8 has parallels in 22:61; Acts 11:16; 20:35; Matt 26:75; 27:63; John 2:(17), 22; 12:16; 15:20; 1 Clem. 13.1; 46.77; Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* 2.3. It may have been a customary phrase to introduce a word of Jesus, but there are great differences among the various writings in terms of the function of this “remembrance.” In Luke it is exclusively linked to the instruction of Jesus entrusted to the disciples. His words are to be “remembered,” while the word of scripture is to be read, interpreted and expounded, opened up—in the light of words that Jesus spoke while he still was with them, and which are entrusted to their memory (see the general references to scripture in Luke 24:25ff., 32, 44ff.).

The exhortation to the women to remember does not make any insinuation that they might have forgotten. Nor should the words addressed to the women be understood as a sharp reproach, like the accusation against the disciples on the road to Emmaus in 24:25f. The main emphasis lies on the posi-

tive proclamation of the resurrection, which explains to the women why the tomb is empty. In Luke, the women themselves have already established that Jesus' body is no longer there. The kerygmatic formula "he is not here, but has risen" is further strengthened by appealing to the women to recall Jesus' earlier prediction and does not carry less meaning than the joyful Easter message in the corresponding narrative in Mark. Those who insist that the angelic messengers are not really recalling the kerygma tend also to presume that the women's remembrance only is an inadequate faith. On the whole this reflects and defends a theological bias which claims that only the christophanies can evoke faith and actually did so. The empty tomb is then at best ambiguous.

As an interpretation of Luke this is not convincing. The exhortation to the women to remember what Jesus told them in Galilee serves to support the message of the resurrection, and the explicit emphasis that the women did remember implies that they truly received this message. It also implies that they both had heard the words and had taken good care of them. Thereby the women from Galilee fulfilled the criterion granting membership in God's family, and they are indeed included among the blessed. By means of the continuous presence and role of the women from Galilee, Luke establishes strong links between the stories about cross and tomb and the rest of the Gospel.

The women's service leads them to a tomb that they find to be empty, to a body that is no longer there—among the dead. In this situation, the women are reaffirmed as hearers of the word: they are the first to hear the message of the resurrection, and this calls to their remembrance the word they once heard from Jesus. This makes them leave the tomb behind, and they go forth and tell everything to the eleven and to all the others. Their act of witness is due to their own spontaneous initiative as a continuation of what they themselves have heard and remembered. The women appear as the first witnesses of the resurrection, and, unlike the narratives in Mark and Matthew, the narrative in Luke 24 says nothing about any hesitation, confusion, or fear on their part as they make their way from the tomb.

The narrative itself guarantees to the reader that the women are trustworthy and credible witnesses. They do speak the truth. The integrity of their testimony is emphasized first by the statement that they told "all this." The later repetition of the story included in the Emmaus narrative (24:22) demonstrates afresh the reliability of the women. The women are also sufficiently numerous to satisfy the formal demand about the number of witnesses; three of the women are named, and the list of names comes pointedly at the close, just as a protocol of testimony concludes by mentioning the names of the witnesses. The imperfect form of the verb in v. 10 can in fact be understood to mean that the women repeatedly told all that they had experienced. Nevertheless, they are not believed; their words seem to the apostles and the male disciples to be empty chatter (v. 11a), and they disbelieve the women (v. 11b). It is not solely a

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matter of the incredibility of the content of the story the women tell. The form of expression in v. 11b shows that it is not irrelevant that women are the storytellers. Here the apostles' unbelief is linked directly to the women. This is in keeping with the fact that women were considered less credible (than men), and, as a rule, they were not accepted juridically as witnesses.

The positioning of the list of names at the close serves also to accentuate a contrast between the women and the men. Luke (as compared with Mark and Matthew) widens the group of women and men to include all. The whole group of women, "Mary of Magdala and Joanna and Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them" (v. 10), are set over against the whole group of men, "the eleven and the rest of the men" (v. 9). All the women give a full testimony, and all the men refuse to believe them.

Peter's visit to the tomb in 24:12 puts him in a slightly more positive light, but only in relation to the rest of the men and their complete lack of belief. Over against the women he comes across as a pale variant. It may serve to prepare the version given by the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (24:22ff.), which in its turn points directly to the Christophany traditions. But this is hardly sufficient to hold that in the Lukan narrative a kind of Petrine primacy is promoted to replace the women's (in particular Mary of Magdala's) testimony so that the risen Lord's revelation to Peter was the point where the church's faith was anchored.

It is indeed true that in Luke the risen Lord himself is supposed to have shown himself to Peter first—although this is not reported in a particular revelation narrative. But the narrative of the women at the empty tomb is not thereby deprived of its character as proclamation of the resurrection. This is why none of the interpretative models referred to above does justice to the special character of the narrative in Luke, as a point of tension where the Gospel's positive emphasis on women's participation encounters the confining and oppressing conditions determining the relationship between women and men. The women's experience is sufficient for them to appear as proclaimers, but when they attempt this, they are not believed, not even by those who should have the ears of faith. It is the men's unbelieving reaction that creates the distance in the Lukan story between the women's early faith and witness and the male disciples' late acceptance.

If irony works by an element of distance between the comprehensive power of the author and the voice of the implied narrator, it is certainly at work in this story. The narrative itself has established in detail that the women from Galilee are trustworthy and fully deserve credit. When the message fails to get across the first time, this is because of the unjustified disbelief of the men. As was also the case concerning the function of service, there is no direct transfer from women to men; here too a christological mediation is necessary. In order to believe, the male disciples must see the risen Lord.

But the conclusion is, all the same, that the persuading force of the women as witnesses is discounted. As witnesses, they possess credibility, but they lack the possibility to convince—even to convince those who ought to have been the most readily prepared to believe. Despite the fact that the women accompanied Jesus on his long journeyings, despite their faithful and fearless perseverance, despite their sustaining service and their discipleship, despite their knowledge of the Lord's word as well as their insight into it, despite their credibility, the effect is that women actually are prevented from the public proclamation and teaching activity. In the further unfolding of story, they are not accepted as appropriate witnesses when Jesus' resurrection is to be proclaimed publicly from Jerusalem to Rome, and the path is laid for the leading men's dominance in Acts.

PUBLIC MEN AND DOMESTIC WOMEN

It is a particular point in Luke, serving apologetic aims, that Jesus' activity followed by the preaching of the apostles and the missionaries takes place openly, not in secret. The public proclamation is maintained by Luke as a male privilege; it is exercised by men and explicitly directed to men. This does not exclude the possibility that women are supposed to be present in the audience and also among the followers of Jesus, but it means that only the men are recognized as active participants in public contexts, which officially were all male. The invisibility of the women does not necessarily reflect the actual reality but is a construction that is ideologically undergirded and maintained. The point is not to maintain that there existed a system of extreme physical separation, but to emphasize that, as a rule, power was organized so that family and home had exclusive significance as the life sphere determining women's identity and function. This is often expressed and exercised in terms of locality; the women belong to "the house."

This construction is a reflection of how the distance between the world of men and the world of women in antiquity largely coincided with the difference between a public and a private room. Women lived in a space defined primarily and ideally as being within "the house," and their education, even in stoic schools, had domestic virtues as its aim. Women could be seen in public places, but their conduct was strictly regulated and there were narrow boundaries for what was seemly. It was only to a limited extent and/or in indirect ways that women were able to exercise functions within the public sphere. Even well-off and aristocratic women were seldom direct participants in a public context. Women who established an autonomous economic basis either through the affluence of their family or through their own business activity could make their mark in the public sphere through their donations and

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