

Jesus at table. Secondly, the traditional depiction of women in Luke-Acts may also betray an intention to counteract more active heroic depictions of women in the Apocryphal Acts.¹⁹⁵ Unlike untraditional heroines like Thecla who don men's clothes, speak in public, and refuse to marry, the women in Luke's meal scenes are traditional Greco-Roman women: silent, submissive, and ready to learn at Jesus' feet.

¹⁹⁵Women are often noted as the primary audience of both Hellenistic romances (Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 84-85) and the Apocryphal Acts. For recent discussions on women in the Apocryphal Acts, see Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy. Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1987); S. L. Davies, *The Revolt of the Widows. The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: So. Illinois Univ. Press; London and Amsterdam: Fetter and Simons, 1980); Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle. The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 127ff.; Bonnie B. Thurston, *The Widows. A Women's Ministry in the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989). Unlike the canonical Acts, in the Apocryphal Acts women figure as the primary heroines of stories, even in those which focus on male characters. The chastity stories in particular could have been popular among women in the early churches who found literary figures like Thecla an inspiration (Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 173ff.). In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Thecla dons men's clothes, leaves her betrothed behind, and joins men like Paul on the mission field. For many women in the ancient church, such a single, ascetic lifestyle may have proven to be a relief from the burdensome roles of childbearer and mother. As in Luke-Acts, widows figure prominently in the Apocryphal Acts, as does the interest in asceticism (cf. Luke 20:34, Mark 12:25 and Luke 18:29). Pervo comments, "Luke 11:27-28 does not support the notion that a woman's role was the production of babies." Moreover, only Luke gives recent marriage as one reason some refuse to attend the eschatological banquet (14:20). Pervo also notes that the women extolled in Luke-Acts are celibate, such as the Virgin Mary, Anna, and Philip's daughters (*Profit with Delight*, 181, n. 79; 24-25; 127ff.). Given this interest in asceticism in Luke, it might be wise not to so easily dismiss the possibility that Luke 10:38-42 may have "contemplative" overtones. Puzo, for example, suggests that there is a relationship between Luke 10:38-42 and 1 Cor 7 which discusses virginity and celibacy ("Marta y Maria"). Luke may be promoting a celibate lifestyle for women, just not one that negates the traditional or ideal Greco-Roman womanly role. If Luke-Acts is to be placed alongside the Apocryphal Acts as Pervo and others have suggested, it may have served as a corrective to other Acts in which women are portrayed as overstepping ideal roles (so now D'Angelo, "Women in Luke-Acts"). There are no heroines in Luke-Acts, and widows, prophetesses, and ascetic women keep their place. Luke drops the term δίκνοχος completely, which we know was used equally for women deacons (Rom 16:1). Pervo also suggests that Luke's limitation of women serves as a contrast of Acts with the Apocryphal Acts. According to Pervo, the author of Luke-Acts did not wish to portray Christianity as a destabilizing factor in Roman social life (*Profit with Delight*, 128). Additionally, it has been suggested that conservative letters like the Pastorals were also written in reaction against earlier oral forms of these apocryphal traditions about Paul and women (MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle*).

Women and Meals in the Gospel of Matthew 5

The Gospel of Matthew has received little attention by New Testament scholars interested in the place of women in early Christian groups. Few articles focus on Matthew as a whole¹ or even on isolated pericopes involving women,² unless it is in conjunction with a larger discussion of popular narratives found in other Gospels.³ As a Gospel often characterized as "Jewish-Christian," it is no doubt regarded as overly patriarchal and therefore infertile ground for feminist exegesis.⁴ However, in the context of this discussion, which sees clues to attitudes about women from depictions of women in meal settings, the Gospel of Matthew stands out as the only Gospel to portray women reclining with men at meals; it is the only Gospel to dare to identify explicitly women in its community with the slanderous term πόρναι.

"Prostitutes" and the Matthean Genealogy (Matt 1:1-17)

The first hint of Matthew's interest in women can be found in the first chapter. Matthew begins with a family register of Jesus'

¹Janice Capel Anderson, "Matthew: Gender and Reading," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 3-27.

²Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 65-72.

³For example, scholars comparatively discuss narratives such as the woman who anoints Jesus (Mark 14 par.) and the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7 par.). Except for Ringe, however, few of the scholars who discuss these passages in Matthew are interested in the topic of women or feminist hermeneutical methods.

⁴See comments by Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 7.

ancestry, in which the names of five women unexpectedly occur. The stereotypical pattern for a biblical genealogy does not include women in the line of descent.⁵ Not even Luke, usually thought to want to "liberate" women,⁶ includes women in his genealogy. Luke's family register for Jesus does not even mention Mary, even though she is the focus of much of his birth narrative. Thus, it is significant that Matthew 1's pattern of male ancestor δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν male ancestor(s), which is repeated thirty-nine times, is broken by the inclusion of the names of five women:

ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ (1:3)

ἐκ τῆς Ραχάβ (1:5a)

ἐκ τῆς Ρουθ (1:5b)

ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου (Bathsheba, 1:6)

Μαριάμ ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς (1:16)⁷

Why does Matthew include women at this point, and why these women? Scholars have pondered the significance of the inclusion of these women in the family register of Jesus. Raymond Brown discusses the common interpretations in his book, *The Birth*

⁵Names of women are rare in Jewish genealogies. Exceptions occur when there is an irregularity in the line of descent, or when there is something exceptional about a woman's name. Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies with Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 153. See also Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 8.

⁶A generalization that is misplaced (see ch. 4).

⁷There exist three main readings for Matt 1:16: (1) "and Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ," which is supported by a wide range of early Greek textual families and other versions, including p¹ B C L W Maj vg sy^h, (2) "and Jacob begot Joseph, to whom being betrothed the virgin Mary bore Jesus, who is called Christ," which is supported by Caesarean and some Old Latin text types (Θ f¹³ i^a b¹ c d (k) q); (3) "Jacob begot Joseph; Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called the Christ," which is attested by the Sinaitic Syriac MS. External evidence supports (1) since it is the reading of all known Greek uncial MSS except Θ, and is attested by all other MSS and versions except those which support (2) and (3). If (2) were thought to be original it would be difficult to imagine why scribes would have omitted a clear reference to the virginity of Mary. There is no evidence that (3) ever existed in a Greek version. The editors of the UBS therefore choose (1) to be the best reading, and rate their decision with a {B}. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 2-7, and concurring discussion by Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 62-64.

of the *Messiah*. His overview is neatly summarized by Janice Capel Anderson.⁸

(1) "... the four Old Testament women were regarded as sinners and their inclusion for Matthew's readers foreshadowed the role of Jesus as the savior of all sinful men" (*sic*).

(2) "... the women were regarded as foreigners and were included by Matthew to show that Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, was related by ancestry to the Gentiles." (This would not apply to Mary.)

(3) The women have two qualities in common with Mary: "(a) there is something extraordinary or irregular in their union with their partners—a union which, though it may have been scandalous to outsiders, continued the blessed lineage of the Messiah; (b) the women showed initiative or played an important role in God's plan and so came to be considered the instrument of God's providence or of His Holy Spirit."

Proposal (1) is usually ruled out on the grounds that Jewish Christian readers of Matthew's time no longer saw these women as "sinners" but as heroines who had done marvelous things for the Jewish people.⁹ The second proposal, popularized by Martin Luther,

⁸Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 71-74. Brown titles this section "Why Bring on the Ladies?"; I am following Anderson for this convenient outline of Brown's discussion (see "Gender and Reading," 8-9).

⁹This was first argued by Friedrich Spitta, "Die Frauen in der Genealogie des Matt." *ZWT* 54 (1912): 1-8. See also Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 71-72; Edwin D. Freed, "Women in Matthew's Genealogy," *JNTS* 29 (1987): 3-19, esp. 3-4; Andrew D. Heffern, "The Four Women in St. Matthew's Genealogy of Christ," *JBL* 31 (1912): 68-81. Heffern also emphasizes the Gentile origins of the four women; Johnson, *Purpose*, 154-55; 176. Ulrich Luz also dismisses the view that these women are included as "sinners" (*Matthew 1-7. A Commentary*, trans. Wilhelm C. Linss [Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Press, 1989], 109-10). For further discussion of Jewish harlots as heroines in Jewish tradition, see Phyllis A. Bird, "The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts," *Semeia* 46 (1989): 119-39 and Amaru, "Portraits of Biblical Women," 143-70, in which Amaru discusses Josephus' description of Rahab as an "innkeeper" (*Ant.* 5.9). See discussion of Josephus' interest in portraying Jewish heroines like Rahab as chaste in pp. 74-75 above. Freed also has a further discussion of the attempt in post-biblical Jewish literature to portray Rahab the Harlot, Ruth, and Bathsheba as chaste heroines. Freed suggests that their behavior is not denied, but rather excused. Thus, according to Freed, Matthew's genealogy prepares the reader for the illegitimacy of Jesus, who is known by the name of his mother and not his father (Mark 6:3; Matt 13:55; Luke 4:22; compare John 6:42 ["The Women in Matthew's Genealogy"]). The suggestion that Matthew selects these women to address a growing controversy over the illegitimacy of Jesus is not new. See Heffern, "Four Women," 76ff. For a compilation of

is often questioned in that the women listed were also known in post-biblical Jewish literature as proselytes, and therefore Jewish converts.¹⁰ Brown's third proposal relies on later Jewish opinion that the irregular behavior of all of these women was in actuality guided by the Holy Spirit.¹¹ Most scholars find some truth in each theory, but commonly focus on the place of these women in Matthew's notion of God's messianic plan.¹²

Given early Hellenistic slander of meretriciousness against early Christian women as an indication of its social libertarianism, it is significant that none of the women leading up to Mary were known for chaste or moral behavior. Tamar, a Canaanite woman, disguised herself as a prostitute in order to seduce her father-in-law Judah, so that she could have children (Gen 38). Rahab, known as Rahab the Harlot,¹³ was the Canaanite professional prostitute in

rabbinic references questioning the legitimacy of Jesus' birth, see Str.-B. 1.36–42 and Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 2. Lachs also relates the reputation of the women to a Matthean interest in countering a charge that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary. Johnson (*Purpose*) also discusses the tendency of Jewish tradition to exonerate Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba in order to portray them as examples of faith in spite of their questionable behavior. Johnson attributes this concern to a polemic within Judaism itself, a controversy over the ancestry of the Davidic Messiah (177ff.). However, Greco-Roman concern over women's behavior, and the apologetic function of defending Jewish women's character generally by defending the moral character of Jewish heroines has already been demonstrated (pp. 74–75).

¹⁰ Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 72–73; Freed, "Women in Matthew's Genealogy," 4; Johnson, *Purpose*, 154–55. Luz sees the non-Jewishness of the women to show Matthew's universality, although he notes that this has little to do with Mary (*Matthew* 1–7, 110).

¹¹ Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 73–74; Freed, "Women in Matthew's Genealogy," 4; Johnson, *Purpose*, 155–58; Herman C. Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel of Matthew," *JBL* 95 (1976): 205–30.

¹² Raymond E. Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 82–83; Freed, "Women in Matthew's Genealogy," 4–5; A. T. Hanson, "Rahab the Harlot in Early Christian Tradition," *JSNVT* 1 (1978): 53; Waetjen, "Genealogy as the Key," 229–30.

¹³ Due to the odd spelling of her name, and given the fact that Rahab's name occurs late in the line of descent (too late for someone connected to the period of the Conquest), Jerome Quinn questions the identification of Παρχαβ as Rahab of Jericho ("Is Παρχαβ in Matt 1,5 Rahab of Jericho?" *Bib* 62 [1981]: 225–28). Brown comments, "Despite the difference of spelling, it is virtually certain that Matthew means the Rahab of the conquest" (*Birth of the Messiah*, 60). It is Rahab the Harlot who became a popular heroine of faith in both rabbinic and Christian sources. See James 2:25, where Παράβ ἡ πόρνη is mentioned along with Abraham as one justified by her works, as well as Heb 11:31, where she is mentioned along with other male examples of faith. 1 Clem 12 also extols Rahab for her faith and hospitality. See Hanson, "Rahab the Harlot," 53–60; Johnson, *Purpose*, 162–65; Freed, "The Women in Matthew's Gene-

ancient Jericho who aided the returning Israelites (Josh 2:6). Ruth, a Moabitess, although virtuous in her loyalty to her mother-in-law, demoralized herself by sneaking into bed with Boaz during a grain festival known for its illicit sexual activity (Ruth 3). Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite, had an adulterous affair with King David after conveniently bathing in a location where David could see her. After Bathsheba became pregnant, David had her husband killed in battle so they could be wed (2 Sam 11–12).¹⁴ The final woman in the list, Mary, given the unique nature of her pregnancy, is also suspected of illicit sexual relations.

In the context of general Hellenistic concern for the behavior of women, Matthew's inclusion of these five morally suspect women in a genealogy—which would not usually include women—is significant. The one feature that all five women share is a bad reputation. Matthew does not deny that the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth give Mary a morally suspect reputation. Rather, Matthew admits the stain upon Mary's reputation and emphasizes the presence of Jewish heroines with morally suspect reputations in Jesus' legal ancestry.¹⁵ That the first four women are Gentiles should not be discounted, but rather considered as secondary.¹⁶ It is significant that the prevailing opinion of early church writers was that the inclusion

alogy," 8. The traditional use of women accused of harlotry as examples of Christian faith is noteworthy. Mary Magdalene has also traditionally been considered a prostitute in Christian tradition.

¹⁴ Freed, "Women in Matthew's Genealogy," 3–4. See also Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 2.

¹⁵ So Jane Schaberg, *The Illegitimacy of Jesus: A Feminist Theological Interpretation of the Infancy Narratives* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 20–32. She also emphasizes the bad reputations of these women. In light of Mary's reputation, Waetjen's suggestion that Matthew is not identifying Mary as a literal virgin seems inviting ("Genealogy as the Key," 228–29). Παρθένος may also merely indicate the age and marriageability of a young woman. Hence a widowed woman, if still young, might also be designated "virgin." See J. Massingberd Ford, "The Meaning of 'Virgin,'" *NTS* 12 (1966): 293–99. James Lagrand challenges Waetjen's position by suggesting that the virginity of Mary is to credit her with transcending natural maternity, and to show her to be the "logical first candidate for entry into the new kingdom 'like a man'" ("How was the Virgin Mary 'Like a Man'? A Note on Matt 1:18 b and Related Syriac Christian Texts," *NovT* 22 (1980): 97–107). I would suggest that if Mary is the "first candidate for entry into the kingdom" as Lagrand contends, it is rather because of her similarity to other women who enter the kingdom in Matt 21:31–32.

¹⁶ That Mary is by implication also Gentile has been rejected. See Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 73, n. 29 and Luz, *Matthew* 1–7, 110, n. 43. Brown notes that this "implausible thesis" has been proposed, and that it was popular during the Third Reich among German scholars.

of these women foreshadowed the concern of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel for sinners and Gentiles.¹⁷ Repentant "sinners" numbered among Jesus' followers.¹⁸ It is my contention that it is on account of their reputation for promiscuity as "sinners" that leads Matthew to mention these five women in the first chapter of his Gospel.

"Tax-Collectors, Sinners, and Courtesans" (Matt 9:9-13; 11:18-19; 21:31-32)

Like Luke, Matthew inherits narratives showing Jesus dining with "tax-collectors and sinners" (Mark 2:14-17/Matt 9:9-13). Matthew also includes a similar accusation from Q (Matt 11:18-19). Unlike Luke, Matthew describes Jesus and his disciples as reclining at table with both "tax-collectors and sinners" (τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ; Matt 9:10-11). Moreover, Matthew is the only Synoptic Gospel that states that "prostitutes" (πόρναι), along with "tax-collectors," will enter the "kingdom of God" (Matt 21:31-32). Thus, Jesus' group includes various and sundry folk, among them women who have previously responded to the message of John the Baptist.

Given the connection between "tax-collectors," "prostitutes" or "courtesans," and bad behavior generally, especially at dinner parties where women are present,¹⁹ Matthew 9:9-13, 11:18-19, and 21:31-32 should be read as closely connected. They contribute to Matthew's larger portrayal of a segment of Jesus' own followers. In light of this, in Matthew the "sinners" mentioned in 9:9-13 (ἁμαρτωλοὶ), which would include women, should be viewed as synonymous with the group of "courtesans" (πόρναι) in 21:31-32 who enter the kingdom of God along with tax-collectors.²⁰ In Matthew, the accusations made by Jesus' opponents include the charge that he dined in public

with women, i.e., women "sinners." Moreover, identifying this group as "foreign" or "Gentiles" coheres with the scandalous portrayal of pagan, promiscuous women.²¹ The accusation that Jesus dines with women "sinners" therefore includes the notion that they were also "Gentiles." Jesus is portrayed as overstepping social boundaries by eating with those considered immoral according to traditional Greco-Roman standards.²² Matthew's incorporation of such sectarian slander terminology reflects the situation of the Matthean community, that of a Jewish-Christian sect in controversy with other Jews.²³

The identification of the "sinners" Jesus dines with in Matthew 9:9-13 with the image of "courtesans" from 21:31-32 can be further substantiated by Matthew's use of the so-called children of the marketplace pericope from Q (Matt 11:16-19). In this passage, "this generation" is likened to παῖδες who sit in the ὄρυγá bemoaning the lack of response to their flute playing and mourning. As previously discussed, this image does not reflect a judicial stance being played out by children,²⁴ but rather the image of hired slaves or servants who were often sent to the marketplace by their masters to seek additional employment.²⁵ Matthew even includes female flute players in the mourning scene in 9:23.²⁶

Matthew has previously contrasted Jesus' behavior with regard to food with that of John the Baptist. Jesus "feasts" whereas John "fasts" (9:14-15). This contrast in behavior is continued in Matthew 11:13-19. The behavior of John the Baptist is likened to that of a slave who mourns at a funeral, while the behavior of Jesus is compared to a slave hired to play a flute at a dinner party. However, in

²¹ See pp. 1-98, ch. 2 passim.

²² According to certain Jewish standards, these people would also be considered "impure." See pp. 90-93. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann interpret "sinners" here in Matthew to be "non-observant Jews." See, *Matthew* (Anchor Bible; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 105-6. Robert H. Gundry points to the inclusion of Gentiles in the meal (*Matthew. A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982], 167).

²³ See J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism. The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1990); Dunn, "Pharisees, Sinners and Jesus," 274-80; Johnson, "Anti-Jewish Slander," passim; and in discussion on pp. 64-65 above.

²⁴ So Cotter, "Children in the Marketplace." See pp. 128-30 above.

²⁵ See pp. 48-49.

²⁶ Even poor families hired at least two flute players and one woman mourner for funerals. See *b. Ketub. 46b*; Gundry, *Matthew*, 175; Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 172. See also the connection of "flute girls" with the term πόρνη in BAGD, 700.

¹⁷ Among these writers are Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Ambrose. See Heffern, "Four Women," 69-70. Heffern himself still sees more significance to the women being Gentiles, i.e., that in the genealogy Matthew here foreshadows not the scandal of Jesus' birth, but rather the scandal of the admission of pagan Gentiles to the church; Johnson, *Purposes*, 154.

¹⁸ Hanson suggests that a woman like Rahab was known also for her remarkable repentance from her immoral life ("Rahab the Harlot," p. 54).

¹⁹ See pp. 39-43, 90-93, 130-33.

²⁰ The relationship of the "prostitutes" in Matthew 21:28-32 to the "sinner" in Luke 7 was noticed by S. Légasse, "Jésus et les prostituées," *RTL* (1976): 137-54.

both instances the response of those who hear their message is the same. Both Jesus and John are rejected: "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend (dining companion)²⁷ of tax-collectors and sinners'" (11:18-19). The behavior of both John and Jesus is here likened to that of servants, and they are accused of having women in their company; John in the context of a funeral, Jesus in the context of a dinner.

The combination of female courtesans and tax-collectors described as leaving John to follow Jesus (Matt 21:31-32) coheres with the image in Matthew 11:13-19, which Matthew derives from Q₁ Matthew 21:31-32 reads:²⁸

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the courtesans are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the courtesans believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

This pericope is attached to the parable of the two sons, a parable long considered to be a Matthean composition (21:28-30).²⁹ Here Jesus contrasts Jewish disobedience with Gentile repentance. Matthew 21:31-32 further demonstrates this contrast by juxtaposing "tax-collectors and courtesans" (who do believe) to the Pharisees (who do not).³⁰ Thus in Matthew, in similar fashion to Luke 7:36-50, Pharisees are likened to those invited to a dinner party but do not attend, even though some "tax-collectors and courtesans" do (Matt 22:1-14). In 11:25, Matthew also compares those who do hear and understand Jesus and John to "infants" (νήπιοι). This probably reflects the influence of the original reading of Q 7:35, in which the secondary ending to the children of the marketplace pericope read: "Wisdom is justified by her children" (τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς), not "Wis-

dom is justified by her deeds" (τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς).³¹ Accordingly, "tax-collectors and courtesans" should be viewed as part of Matthew's church of "little ones" who await the coming messianic banquet which the Pharisees refuse to attend (Matt 22:1-14).³² In fact, here the "faith" (πίστευον) of the "tax-collectors and courtesans" is highlighted for the Matthean community, many of whom might better identify with "those of little faith" (ὀλιγόπιστοι) in other portions of the narrative.³³ Hence, along with "tax-collectors," "courtesans" enter the "kingdom" (βασιλεία). Accepting Jesus' teaching concerning the "kingdom" is a qualification of Matthean discipleship.³⁴ Matthew similarly highlights the "great faith" of the Canaanite woman in chapter 15.

However, Matthew 21:31-32 not only coheres with the so-called children in the marketplace pericope found in Q₁ but given the inexact parallel found in Luke 7:29-30, there is reason to suspect that some form of this pericope may have occurred in Q₁. Immediately preceding the children in the marketplace pericope in Luke, we find an enticing parallel to Matthew 21:31-32:

"I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (And all the people who heard this, including the tax-collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purposes for themselves) (Luke 7:28-30, NRSV).

There are several reasons for suggesting that some form of this pericope might have been present in Q₁. Despite the fact that most agree that Q₁ did not contain some form of this saying,³⁵ some commentators still infer that here Luke and Matthew are drawing on

³¹ Ron Cameron, "What Have You Come Out to See? Characterizations of John and Jesus in the Gospels," *Semeia* 49 (1990): 35-69, esp. 40-41; Cotter, "Children in the Marketplace," 292-94; Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 111.

³² See pp. 174-77 below.

³³ See discussion of Matthean understanding of "faith" in Ulrich Luz, "The Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, ed. Graham Stanton (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, London: SPCK, 1983), 98-128, esp. 107 on Matt 21:32. This article was originally published in German, in *ZNW* 62 (1971): 141-71. I cite Robert Morgan's translation.

³⁴ Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 109.

³⁵ Cameron, "Characterizations" 36-38; Gundry, *Matthew*, 422-23; Kloppenborg does not include this pericope in Q₁ (*Formation of Q*). But see remarks by Bultmann, *History*, 177.

²⁷ See pp. 92-93; 111, n. 11; 114, esp. n. 27 and D. Smith, "Jesus at Table," 477ff., 480ff.; idem, "Table Fellowship," 634.

²⁸ NRSV with emendations.

²⁹ Bultmann, *History*, 177; Gundry, *Matthew*, 421-22.

³⁰ This parallelism rests on favoring the reading in 21:29-31 supported by a C* W and others, and the inclusion of οὐδὲ in 21:32. The textual transmission of the parable is very confused, and this confusion seems to have affected the final clause of v. 32. Even the UBS editors mark their decision with a {C}. For a more lengthy discussion, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 55-57, and additional comments by Gundry, *Matthew*, 421-22.

source material.³⁶ The most likely source material Luke and Matthew would have drawn on at this point is Q.

A reading of Luke's version of this pericope presents several arguments that favor Luke's having a source that included *πόρνοι* as in Matthew 21. First of all, the presence of *πόρνοι* in Q would explain the portrayal of the woman in Luke 7 as a prostitute (*πόρνη*).³⁷ Second, a reference to *πόρνοι* in Q would explain Luke's connection of the "servants/children" in the marketplace in Q 7:32 to the female "sinner" in Luke 7:36ff.³⁸ An occurrence of *πόρνοι* in Q 7 would explain Luke's inclusion of the anointing story at this point. Moreover, a Q passage contrasting the response of "prostitutes" or "courtesans" to Jesus and John with the lack of response of the Pharisees would also explain Luke's setting of the anointing story in the house of "Simon the Pharisee." Furthermore, a Lukan shift from *οἱ τελῶναι* and *καὶ αἱ πόρνοι* to *πᾶς ὁ λαός* and *οἱ τελῶναι* is likely, given Luke's tendency to avoid depicting Jesus joining women for meals and his tendency to cast the women around Jesus as respectable.³⁹

Luke also shows a tendency to redact passages in such a way as to keep Jesus from dining with "sinners" (5:29; 7:34; 15:1ff.; 19:1–10). This is probably because Luke interpreted the "sinners" found in Mark 2 to be women or to include women. He identifies the one woman "sinner" with the adjective *ἀμαρτωλός*. Luke also tries to identify Jesus' "dining companions" as men, by adding "male friends" (and therefore "dining companions"; *οἱ γυνῶστοι*) to the crowd that watches the crucifixion.⁴⁰ Thus, a clear reference to female "courtesans" in connection with "tax-collectors" in Q 7 would readily explain Luke's identification of the "sinners" in Mark 2 with women.

Furthermore, if a reference to "tax-collectors and courtesans" were present in Q 7, Luke's redaction of Mark 2 in chapter 5 is easily explained. Luke has Jesus eat with the ambiguous "tax-collectors and others" (*ἄλλοι*), not "tax-collectors and sinners" (*ἀμαρτωλοί*).⁴¹ I would suggest that again Luke avoids portraying Jesus as dining with

women. Luke's shift from Mark's *ἀμαρτωλοί* to *ἄλλοι* in Luke 5:29 corresponds neatly to a shift from *πόρνοι* (in Q) to *πᾶς ὁ λαός* in Luke 7:29. Thus, Luke's interpretation of the children in the marketplace pericope, his use of the story about the woman who anoints Jesus, and his redactional activity all suggest that Luke's version of Q might have contained a reference to "tax-collectors and courtesans" (*πόρνοι*) in Q 7.

Indications in Matthew's Gospel also suggest that some form of Matthew 21:31–32 might have been present in Q. First, the occurrence of the non-Matthean phrase "kingdom of God" in v. 31 has puzzled commentators.⁴² Moreover, Matthew's children of the marketplace pericope reflects the connection between Jesus' and John's followers to female servants or slaves (prostitutes).⁴³ Furthermore, recent scholarship on Q and Matthew suggests that Matthew continues an egalitarian tradition which may predate him, a tradition that may be traced back to his own community's roots in the Q community.⁴⁴ If Q scholars determine that Q 7 included "courtesans," then the egalitarian tradition Matthew inherits might have allowed for the inclusion of women in meals as well as the rejection of an overly hierarchical leadership structure.

The proposal that Q 7 linked Jesus and John to "courtesans" would further buttress Ron Cameron's affirmation that Q characterizes both John and Jesus as two types of Cynics: one "ascetic," the other "hedonistic."⁴⁵ Cynics were one of the philosophical sects that were well-known for their inclusion of women. Women connected to Greco-Roman Cynicism were characterized as prostitutes or courtesans.⁴⁶ If this kind of slander leveled against the followers of Jesus and John were present in Q, it would enhance the connection between Jesus and John at the level of Greco-Roman philosophical sectarianism, particularly the argument that they both might be characterized as Cynics of some kind. Matthew's possible retention of *πόρνοι* from Q could be one aspect of that connection.⁴⁷ Lest

³⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 211; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1975), 410.

³⁷ See pp. 121–33.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ See comments on connection of the theme of "friendship" to banquets, pp. 92–93; 111, n. 11; 114, esp. n. 27; 154.

⁴¹ See pp. 131–32.

⁴² Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 263; Gundry, *Matthew*, 423–24; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 410.

⁴³ See pp. 154–55.

⁴⁴ See p. 179.

⁴⁵ Cameron, "Characterizations," 60.

⁴⁶ See pp. 63–65, esp. 63, n. 230.

⁴⁷ At this juncture we must await the further work of the International Q Project, particularly the dissertation of Sterling Bjorndahl which will deal with the

female members of his community interpret his interest in these kinds of women to be an advocacy for truly promiscuous or non-repentant behavior, Matthew adds the exception to the divorce prohibition (Matt 19:3-9).⁴⁸

Herod's Birthday Party (Matt 14:1-12)

Unlike Luke, Matthew preserves a dramatization of the events surrounding the death of John the Baptist, material he receives from Mark. Here Matthew inherits an account of a dinner party which fits a more typical Greco-Roman symposium scene. Matthew's redaction of this birthday party scene further indicates his more egalitarian stance regarding meals. Matthew's redaction places the blame for the incident firmly upon Herod and allows for the presence of Herodias at the meal. Matthew's redaction of Mark 6:14-29 also reveals his interest in maintaining a strong link between John and Jesus.

Matthew begins by identifying Herod with the more accurate title δ τετραάρχης.⁴⁹ This distinguishes Herod Antipas from Herod the Great.⁵⁰ Omitted are the references to the military officers (χιλίαρχοι) and upper-class Galileans ($\text{οἱ πρώτοι τῆς Γαλιλαίας}$; Mark 6:21) which helped characterize the party as a men's symposium in Mark. Thus, Matthew does not seem interested in using this story (as does Mark) to contrast the behavior of the overlord Herod to that of the servant-king Jesus.⁵¹

In 14:2, Matthew has Herod immediately connect Jesus with John the Baptist. The possibility that Jesus is Elijah or another prophet is reserved by Matthew until 16:13-14.⁵² This is another

relationship between Jesus and John in Q. Enough suspicion has been raised here, however, to merit further close attention to the possibility of including Luke 7:29-30/Matt 21:31-32 as part of Q⁷ in some form.

⁴⁸ I.e., that women may be divorced on account of "unchastity" (πορνεία) (v. 9). Matthew here omits the woman's right to file divorce proceedings. Only the man's right to divorce is mentioned.

⁴⁹ As does Luke (9:7). See Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 175; Willoughby Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1965), 157; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 317. For an opposing view, see Gundry, *Matthew*, 285.

⁵⁰ Matthew retains the title βασιλεύς in v. 9 (Gundry, *Matthew*, 285).

⁵¹ See pp. 93-95 and Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels*, 36-37.

⁵² Allen, *Matthew*, 159; Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels*, 73, n. 7; Gundry,

example of the close association Matthew makes between Jesus and John. Moreover, here John's disciples report the turn of events to Jesus (14:12). This added clause gives the impression that John's disciples have been sent to Jesus by John⁵³ and suggests that, after John's death, the disciples of John were incorporated into Jesus' group.⁵⁴ Among these would no doubt be the "tax-collectors and prostitutes" who are said to have "believed John" in Matthew 21:31-32.⁵⁵ Once again Matthew implies that Jesus and John are connected by means of a shared group of followers.⁵⁶ Given the use of $\rho\acute{o}\nu\alpha\iota$ in Matthew 21:31-32, we must conclude that Matthew intends his readers to realize that some of Jesus' followers are women.⁵⁷

Matthew's rendition of the actual dinner also allows for the inclusion of women and removes the burden of guilt from Herodias. The daughter of Herodias does not need to "enter" (εἰσέρχουαι) (so Mark) because she is already "in the midst" (ἐν τῷ μέσῳ) of the partygoers. Nor does the young girl need to "go out" (ἐξέρχουαι) of the party to find her mother. Since this is not necessary, it can be assumed that her mother is present.⁵⁸ Herodias becomes a natural guest of her brother-in-law, since she is not portrayed as having already married Herod, and she is not assumed here to have apartments in the royal palace (14:3; cf. Mark 6:19).⁵⁹ For example, her young daughter is called "the daughter of Herodias" not the daughter of Herod (14:6).⁶⁰ Furthermore, Matthew omits the remark that Herodias was unable to kill John (Mark 6:19) and ignores her subsequent resentment of John's opposition to her second marriage. In Matthew, it is Herod who resents John's objection to a marriage which Herod intends, and it is Herod who wants John dead (14:3-

Matthew, 285.

⁵³ Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels*, 73, n. 7; John P. Meier, "John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel," *JBL* 99 (1980): 383-405.

⁵⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 289.

⁵⁵ Luke also records that "tax-collectors" came to John for baptism (Luke 3:12-13). It may also be argued on the basis of Luke 7:29-30 that a certain number of people, including tax-collectors, were a part of John's circle and eventually joined that of Jesus. See pp. 125-30.

⁵⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 289; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 317.

⁵⁷ Luke, on the other hand, wants to obscure this. See pp. 130-33.

⁵⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 286-89.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 286-87.

⁶⁰ This is following the better reading for Mark 6:22a. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 89.

5).⁶¹ In Matthew, Herod is not John's protector who only reluctantly gives into the whims of his new, vindictive mate, as in Mark (6:20); rather, he instigates the events leading to John's death. Thus, Matthew shifts the guilt for the death of John from Herodias to Herod. Just as Herod the Great wished for the death of Jesus (Matt 2:1-18), here Herod Antipas seeks the death of John.⁶² John and Jesus are further linked, and the women, now present for the meal, are exonerated in the process.⁶³

The Feeding of Thousands, Including Women (Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-39)

Matthew's true openness to women in his community can be deduced from his mention of women in the crowds which benefit from the miraculous feedings. Of all the evangelists, only Matthew includes women in both of his feeding narratives. Men, women, and children gather to receive bread from Jesus via his disciples, giving these meals the ambiance of a large family celebration. Moreover, Matthew recasts these meals as Eucharistic feasts, and his wording alludes to the institution of the Lord's Supper in chapter 26. Matthew's feeding stories look forward to the messianic banquet, which he characterizes as a wedding banquet (Matt 22:1-14), the kind of family affair for which even unmarried virgins prepare (25:1-13). Thus, of all the Synoptics, only Matthew allows for the egalitarian presence of women in public meals, not only within the time of the Jesus movement, but within the context of Matthean church gatherings.

⁶¹ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 176; Gundry, *Matthew*, 286-87; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 317-18.

⁶² Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 176; Gundry, *Matthew*, 286-87; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 5; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 317-18.

⁶³ Matthew also includes another glimpse of an upper-class woman, whom he also casts in a more sympathetic light, that being the wife of Pilate (27:19). This may be due to his interest in the upper classes in general, as well as his interest in women. See Michael H. Crosby, *House of Disciples. Church, Economics and Justice in Matthew* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988), who considers the Matthean community to be relatively urban and wealthy, as does Kingsbury, *Matthew*. For a discussion of this more recent consensus on the urban origin of Matthew in Syrian Antioch, see Donald Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 13-14.

The first feeding miracle opens with a reference to the lateness of the hour, "when evening came" (ὥρας δὲ γενομένης; 14:15). This characterizes the scene as an evening meal and associates the feeding with the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. The reference to the late hour also occurs in the opening to the Last Supper in Matthew 26:20. In fact, Matthew's abbreviation of the Markan feeding narratives further emphasizes the allusions to the Eucharist already present in Mark.⁶⁴ Matthew also here emphasizes the "crowds" (ὄχλοι; 14:13, 14, 15, 19) that gather for the meal, which foreshadows the eventual numbers that will join the Eucharistic feasts of the church.⁶⁵ Jesus, like the host of the Lord's Supper, "takes" (λαμβάνω), "blesses" (εὐλογέω), "breaks" (κλάω), and "gives" (δίδωμι) the bread, which the disciples then distribute to the crowds. This vocabulary will be repeated at the institution of the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:26-29.⁶⁶ Since the Lord's Supper does not include fish, Matthew repeatedly deemphasizes its presence in this scene (14:16, 20).⁶⁷

Not only is this a gathering foreshadowing the Eucharists of the Matthean community, but Matthew also characterizes this meal as a large family meal, not a symposium just for men as in Mark. Matthew omits the arrangement of the men "symposia by symposia" (συνπρόσια συμπόσιοι; Mark 6:39). Instead, in this feeding scene, "men" (ἄνδρες), "women" (γυναῖκες) and "children" (παιδιά; 14:21) all "recline" (ἀνακλίνω; 14:19) together for the meal. The mixture of the sexes here and the mention of men, women, and children gathering together to eat a meal suggest that the Greek words ἄνδρες and γυναῖκες could be translated as "husbands" and "wives."⁶⁸ Thus, the crowds represent the church, which is here likened to a household, reminiscent of the "holy family" of Joseph (ἀνὴρ), Mary (γυνή), and Jesus (παῖς), found in chapters 1-2 of the Gospel.⁶⁹ A household would also include

⁶⁴ Many commentators acknowledge that the Matthean scenes are cast as Eucharists. This is best clarified by Heinz Joachim Held, "Matthew as Interpreter of the Miracle Stories," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, Günther Bornkamm et al. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 187; See also Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 178-79; Gundry, *Matthew*, 291; Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 241; Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 105; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 319.

⁶⁵ Gundry, *Matthew*, 291.

⁶⁶ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 179; Gundry, *Matthew*, 293. This terminology may also reflect rabbinic table procedure. See Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 241.

⁶⁷ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 185-86; Gundry, *Matthew*, 293-94.

⁶⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 295; Crosby, *House of Disciples*, 115.

⁶⁹ For Joseph as "husband" (ἀνὴρ) see Matt 1:19; Mary as "wife" (γυνή) see

servants.⁷⁰ Noting this identification of the church as a household in Matthew 14:21, Robert Gundry remarks: "Thus Matthew portrays the crowds as the church, a gathering of Christian families."⁷¹ The Matthean community is not gathering together for orgiastic symposia, but is rather reclining for a religious family meal more akin to a Jewish Passover celebration or a wedding feast, both of which always included women and children.⁷²

This apologetic interest is related to Matthew's redaction of the feast parable and his addition of the parable of the ten virgins. In 22:1-14, Matthew likens the coming messianic banquet to a marriage feast given by a king. In the ancient world, women and children commonly attended such parties, even during times when respectable women did not attend other kinds of public dinners.⁷³ Wedding celebrations were an exception, being family gatherings with a more limited guest list. Even young unmarried women were allowed to attend these banquets, although the adult women and young virgins were often seated separately and at times wore veils.⁷⁴ Given this background, it is significant that the special Matthean material contains the parable of the ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13). In this parable, the coming messianic feast is also likened to a wedding, a dinner for which even young unmarried virgins prepare. The young

1:20, 24; Jesus, by implication is "child" (παῖς or τὸ παιδίον) (2:2, 8, 9, 11, 13-14, 20-21). Gundry, *Matthew*, 295; Crosby, *House of Disciples*, 115; Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Title 'Son of David' in Matthew's Gospel," *JBL* 95 (1976): 591-602, esp. 594-96.

⁷⁰ Could παῖδιον in Matt 14:21 be "servants"?

⁷¹ Gundry, *Matthew*, 295.

⁷² If the Last Supper is thought to be a Passover meal, which would include women, it is Matthew who is thus the most likely Gospel which may assume the presence of women in the final meal of Jesus and his disciples. See Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 41-62 and concluding remarks below. Given Matthew's characterization of the feedings, in this regard the Gospel of Matthew fits well into the context of early Christian groups which were accused of promiscuous behavior at evening meals. See pp. 75-78.

⁷³ That the Talmud prohibited women from reclining at weddings is a prohibition too late to be relevant to the first century. Jeremias is therefore incorrect in assuming that women would not have been present (Joachim Jeremias, "Lampades in Matthew 25:1-13," *Soli Deo Gloria: New Testament Studies in Honor of William Childs Robinson*, ed. J. McDowell Richards [Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1968], 86). Elizabeth Waller is correct to challenge Jeremias on this point ("Mt 25:1-13: The Parable of the Ten Virgins," *Proceedings of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society* 1 (1981): 85-109, esp. 91. See pp. 26, 29-30.

⁷⁴ See pp. 26, 29-30.

women in this parable parade down a public street at night in an urban area,⁷⁵ and their procession is reminiscent of those conducted in the worship of Hellenistic deities.⁷⁶ The closest parallel to the language of this story appears in the Jewish *Joseph and Asenath* from Egypt.⁷⁷ Thus, Matthew constructs a story in which women figure prominently, appearing at night on public streets and proceeding to a festive meal which looks forward to the messianic banquet. In spite of their behavior, Matthew still calls them virgins, although he may intend for the reader to understand them to be hired servants.⁷⁸ In any case, the parable does not indicate that their behavior is inappropriate. The women are parading to a familial gathering. The meal portrayed in the feeding narrative is a similar kind of public meal, and it too looks forward to this messianic banquet.⁷⁹ Women attend the meals around Jesus, and subsequently the Eucharistic feasts of the Matthean community, not because they are truly promiscuous,

⁷⁵ Joachim Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), 136; idem, "Lampades," 85. Waller questions the urban setting Jeremias gives the parable (Waller, "Ten Virgins," 97-98).

⁷⁶ Waller, "Ten Virgins," 98.

⁷⁷ Young Asenath is similarly attended by a group of virgins, who rise to inquire after their mistress, whose door is then found shut (*Joseph and Asenath* 10). These young women, however, are definitely slaves. The text is now dated first century BCE through the second century CE. See translation and notes by C. Burchard, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 177-247; Waller, "Ten Virgins," 100-101.

⁷⁸ As in *Joseph and Asenath* 10. This is similar to Matthew's handling of Mary in Matt 1-2 (Waller, "Ten Virgins," 95). Mary is the only other woman designated "virgin" in the Gospel. "Virgin" may here merely designate a young unmarried woman (for example, even one who may have been married previously, but is now widowed) (J. Massingberd Ford, "The Meaning of 'Virgin,'" 298; Waller, "Ten Virgins," 96). Jeremias expresses discomfort with the image of the parable, which he argues cannot be true to life (Jeremias, *Rediscovering*, 136; idem, "Lampades," 85). What ancient Near Eastern family would allow their daughters to behave in such a manner? Compounding the problem is the fact that the young women here perform a task usually given to men. Young girls attend the bride, not the bridegroom. Bridegrooms are attended by men (Waller, "Ten Virgins," 86, 92, 105, n. 56; 107, n. 47). Gundry suggests that the Ten Virgins may be maidservants or slaves (*Matthew*, 501). This would buttress Waller's comparison of the parable's terminology with the language in *Joseph and Asenath* 10. If they are meant to be hired for the wedding party (in a similar manner to slave women hired for a funeral, see Waller, "Ten Virgins," 98), then their being out in the open is not an issue. The verbal similarities between the story of Tamar's rape and this parable which are cited by Waller are tantalizing, given the listing of Tamar in the genealogy in ch. 1 ("Ten Virgins," 99). If these women are meant to be slaves, then their "going in" to the wedding feast corresponds to the entering into the kingdom of God by the πορναι in 21:31-32.

⁷⁹ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 179; Gundry, *Matthew*, 292.

but because the church is like a family or a large household which joins together for festive meals, even nocturnal ones.⁸⁰ Hence Matthew's addition to the divorce prohibition becomes more explicable. Women in the Matthean community still may be divorced for true promiscuity (πορνεία; Matt 19:9), but this would not include attendance at public religious meals.

Matthew also records the feeding of the four thousand. This second scene also allows for the presence of "women" (γυναῖκες) and "children" (παιδιά) in a similarly familial grouping (Matt 15:32–39).⁸¹ Again, Eucharistic language is present, and Jesus as the host of the Lord's Supper, "takes" (λαμβάνω), "blesses" (εὐλογέω), "breaks" (κλάω), and "gives" (δίδωμι) the bread to be distributed to the crowds by the disciples.⁸² In chapter 15, however, Jesus is in Gentile territory, and the crowds in this instance are Gentiles rather than Jews.⁸³ As in Mark, the second feeding narrative follows the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman, who in Matthew is called a Canaanite. After Jesus allows for the healing of a Gentile girl, he is pictured as feeding an entire Gentile group.⁸⁴ Again, the large numbers of those fed foreshadows and symbolizes the large numbers that will eventually join the church. In this case Gentile members are represented, which includes women proselytes and their children. Matthew here, as in 14:13–21, depicts an open, egalitarian, and inclusive household meal. Thus, all will be welcomed to the table fellowship of the Matthean community, whether they be Jew or Gentile, slave or free, young or old, male or female.

⁸⁰ See Crosby, *House of Disciples* and concluding remarks below.

⁸¹ It is difficult to decide between the two readings for Matt 15:38: (1) γυναῖκων καὶ παιδίων (attested by B C L W f⁴³ Maj and numerous others) and (2) παιδίων καὶ γυναικῶν (attested by N D Θ f¹ lat, and by Coptic and Syriac versions. Variant (1) is supported by a wide variety of witnesses, (2) by primarily Western text types. The phrase "children and women," would have been unusual and is more likely to have caused scribes to alter it to "women and children." However, given the weighty external evidence, the editors of the UBS still cautiously adopt variant (1). They rate their decision with only a {D}. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 41.

⁸² Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 189; Gundry, *Matthew*, 321; Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 187; Schweizer notes the repeated emphasis on the bread (*Matthew*, 330).

⁸³ Gundry, *Matthew*, 319ff. Schweizer notes the Gentile location of the second feeding, but doubts that a contrast with the Jewish location of the first feeding is meant (*Matthew*, 332).

⁸⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 320–22.

The Canaanite Woman (Matt 15:21–28)

Spliced in between the two feeding miracles, Matthew continues to follow Markan order by repeating the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman.⁸⁵ Given the addition of women and children to the feeding narratives, particularly the second feeding of Gentiles in 15:29–38, Matthew's intention to highlight this story as one which concerns a woman and her child (who are also Gentiles) cannot entirely be discounted.⁸⁶ Unlike Mark, Matthew did have before him another miracle story involving a Gentile,⁸⁷ yet here he still keeps Markan order. Thus, set between the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand, the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman sets a precedent within the ministry of Jesus for including Gentiles—even women Gentiles—in church meals.

Matthew begins his narrative by further connecting this section to the preceding discussion of Jewish dietary laws (15:1–20) by means of a continuative καὶ (15:21).⁸⁸ Matthew adds "and Sidon" to the Markan "Tyre"⁸⁹ (v. 21b), the "districts" (τὰ μέρη) of which Jesus "withdraws into" (ἀναχωρῶ with εἰς). Hence, in Matthew Jesus actually enters Gentile territory, rather than merely remaining on its outskirts as in Mark.⁹⁰ The way in which Matthew refers to "Tyre and Sidon" recalls even more stereotypical language concerning sinful cities worthy of God's judgment in Jewish biblical tradition.⁹¹ The woman who approaches Jesus in Gentile territory is here called

⁸⁵ Luke's Gospel does not contain a section of material from this point in Mark (Mark 6:45–7:26), which deals with Jesus and Gentiles. Luke's decision to omit the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman may be part of a larger decision. See Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 154, n. 2.

⁸⁶ In contrast to Gundry, *Matthew*, 317. Although one could argue that both feedings involve women and children, the combination of Matthew's addition of the women in 14:20–21 and 15:37–38 makes the gender of the Gentile woman in 15:21–28 more noticeable.

⁸⁷ The Centurion's son from Q (Matt 8:5–13); Schweizer, *Matthew*, 329.

⁸⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 313.

⁸⁹ The addition of καὶ Σιδῶνος to Mark 7:24 probably arose by means of assimilation from Matt 15:21. The shorter text of Mark 7:24 is supported by Western and Caesarean text types. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 95.

⁹⁰ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 187; Gundry, *Matthew*, 310. Schweizer argues the Greek could also indicate that Jesus went in the direction of Gentile territory (*Matthew*, 330).

⁹¹ See p. 98, esp. n. 73. See also Matt 11:21–22; Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 164; Gundry, *Matthew*, 310; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 330.

a Canaanite, rather than "Syro-Phoenician." This is an outdated identification, since there were no "Canaanites" by the first century.⁹² Nonetheless, Matthew must have some reason for choosing it. First, "Canaanite woman" (γυνὴ Χαναανίτις) recalls at least two of the women accused of harlotry in Matthew's genealogy, Tamar and Rahab, both Canaanites.⁹³ Moreover, given Israel's struggle with temple prostitution assimilated from Canaanite religious ritual, Canaanite women have a strong connection with prostitution and sexual sin in Jewish biblical tradition.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Matthew sets the scene more naturally out in the open,⁹⁵ which might heighten the impropriety of the woman's actions.⁹⁶ Thus, even more clearly in Matthew than in Mark⁹⁷ Jesus is portrayed as ministering to a woman associated with harlotry, a "sinner."⁹⁸

As the woman approaches, she immediately begs for mercy and calls Jesus by the messianic title, "Son of David" (υἱὸς Δαυὶδ; 15:22). This title is reserved in Matthew for healing miracles.⁹⁹ In combining "Son of David" with the title "Lord" (κύριε), the Canaanite

⁹² Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 248. Albright and Mann suggest that Canthaginian peasants at the time of Augustine still called themselves "Canaanites" (Matthew, 187). Derrett argues that the reference to "Canaanite" comes from a Matthean use of Judg 1:5–7, in which King Adoni-bezek (a Canaanite) places other kings under his table to scavenge for crumbs after first cutting off their thumbs and big toes ("Law in the New Testament," 173).

⁹³ See pp. 150–51.

⁹⁴ A perusal of the Hebrew prophets would easily support this. Commentators mention the distinction between Jews and Canaanites in the Hebrew Bible, but miss the relevance of that distinction with regard to Canaanite women. See for example comments by Gundry, *Matthew*, 310; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 330.

⁹⁵ Allen, *Matthew*, 168; Hasler, "The Incident," 459.

⁹⁶ Ringe, "A Gentile Woman's Story," 70.

⁹⁷ See pp. 95–102.

⁹⁸ A few scholars connect the Canaanite woman to the group "sinners" and note her impropriety. See Mark C. Thompson, "Matthew 15:21–28," *Int* 35 (1981): 279–84, esp. 282; Burkitt, "The Syro-Phoenician Woman," 177; Ringe understands this clearly, as she writes, "No Jewish man, especially one with a religious task or vocation, expected to be approached by a woman (Jew or Gentile), except perhaps by one of the many lone women reduced to prostitution to support themselves" ("A Gentile Woman's Story," 70, italics mine). Ringe also calls the Canaanite woman "the poorest of the poor and most despised of the outcasts—a Gentile woman on her own before God and humankind" ("A Gentile Woman's Story," 72). Likewise, Anderson recognizes the marginality of the Canaanite Woman. She is "alone with no indication of an embedded status in a patriarchal family" ("Gender and Reading," 11).

⁹⁹ Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 54; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology and Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 108–9; Kingsbury, "The Title 'Son of David,'" 592, 598.

woman makes what amounts to a confession of faith—even before Jesus grants her request.¹⁰⁰ Her faith in Jesus as the Messiah is contrasted with the lack of belief among many Jews, particularly the Pharisees featured at the beginning of chapter 15.¹⁰¹ The association of the woman with harlotry allows her to be easily compared to the Pharisees (Matt 21:31–32).¹⁰²

After the woman acknowledges Jesus as Lord and Messiah, crying out (κράζω) she beseeches Jesus to cast a demon from her daughter. Her tone annoys the disciples (15:23). At first, Jesus simply ignores the woman and speaks only to his disciples, who tell him to "send her away." This does not imply that they want him to grant her request, but merely that he rid them of her annoying presence.¹⁰³ Jesus' lack of direct response to the woman makes his first reaction to her even more rude than it is portrayed in Mark.¹⁰⁴ At first Jesus says nothing at all. Subsequently, Jesus gives only a flat refusal: "I was sent only to the house of Israel" (15:24). This refusal alludes to Matthew 10:5–6, where Jesus limits his ministry to the Jews.¹⁰⁵ In spite of his refusal, the woman persists, kneeling in worship (προσκυνέω) before Jesus, again calling him "Lord" (κύριε; 15:25).¹⁰⁶ Jesus' next reply (still spoken to the disciples, not to the woman) does not even refer to the sequential priority of the Jews (who are to be fed "first" in the Markan version [Mark 7:27]), which would imply that the Gentiles might at least be "fed" second. Only the negative remark remains, "It is not good (καλός) to take the children's bread

¹⁰⁰ Gundry, *Matthew*, 311; Kingsbury, "The Title 'Son of David,'" 600–601.

¹⁰¹ See Matt 15:1ff. Kingsbury writes of the Matthean use of the title 'Son of David,' that those who use the title "see" and "confess" what Israel and its leaders do not, viz., that he is the Davidic Messiah promised and sent to this people by God ("The Title 'Son of David,'" 601). This is also true in the case of the Canaanite woman, in that "even a Gentile woman will see what Israel will not" ("The Title 'Son of David,'" 601). Also at issue would be the dietary laws which separate Jews and Gentiles (Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 188; Gundry, *Matthew*, 311–12).

¹⁰² See pp. 152–58.

¹⁰³ Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 65. Lachs suggests the opposite (*Rabbinic Commentary*, 248), as does Gundry, *Matthew*, 312.

¹⁰⁴ Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 69; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 329.

¹⁰⁵ Allen, *Matthew*, 169; Gundry, *Matthew*, 313–14.

¹⁰⁶ Her supplication also reflects the language of the Psalms (Gundry, *Matthew*, 313–14). G. R. O'Day suggests that Matthew patterns this entire story after a lament psalm. See "Surprised by Faith: Jesus and the Canaanite Woman," *Listening* 24 (1989): 290–301.

and give it to the dogs" (15:26).¹⁰⁷ Again, the woman and her child are the "little dogs" (κυνάρια). In Matthew the term "dogs" is unquestionably a derogatory designation for Gentiles.¹⁰⁸

In spite of Jesus' rude remarks and continued refusal the woman agrees with him. Matthew adds the word "yes" (ναι) to the woman's reply (15:27).¹⁰⁹ With the addition of ναι, the woman's reply becomes an agreement with Jesus' statement, not the clever rebuttal that it seems in Mark.¹¹⁰ Matthew thus tempers the image of the woman's similarity to a witty courtesan.¹¹¹ The "children" (so Mark) have been replaced with "masters" (κύριοι), which relates the table in question to the "Lord's" (i.e., Jesus').¹¹² The woman affirms that she and her daughter are included within the household of the new movement, even though Jesus' ministry was to be only on behalf of the "household" (οἶκος) of Israel. By requesting the healing of her daughter, the woman requests "scraps of bread" from a table, a phrase which alludes to the "scraps" collected after the miraculous feedings, which are in turn symbolic of Eucharistic feasts held by the new "household," the church.¹¹³

Finally, Jesus relents; however, he relents not because of the woman's witty argumentation but because of her great faith which persists in spite of his rudeness and repeated refusals: "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire" (15:28). Matthew's heightening of Jesus' refusal accentuates the great faith of the woman.¹¹⁴ It is the great faith of the woman which justifies the extension of the Matthean mission to the Gentiles and their inclu-

¹⁰⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 314; Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 198; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 329.

¹⁰⁸ Allen, *Matthew*, 169; Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 165, n. 3; Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 249; Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 68. See pp. 100–101, n. 86. Gundry does not consider the remark derogatory (*Matthew*, 315).

¹⁰⁹ Again, the addition of ναι to Mark 7:28 is due to assimilation from the Matthean parallel. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 95; Gundry, *Matthew*, 315.

¹¹⁰ Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 171; Gundry, *Matthew*, 315; Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 199; Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 66.

¹¹¹ See pp. 101–2.

¹¹² Gundry, *Matthew*, 316.

¹¹³ Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 15; Crosby, *House of Disciples*; Gundry, *Matthew*, 316.

¹¹⁴ Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 187; Gundry, *Matthew*, 313; Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 198; Jerome H. Neyrey, "Decision Making in the Early Church. The Case of the Canaanite Woman (Matt 15:21–28)," *ScEs* 33 (1981): 373–78, esp. 375; O'Day, "Surprised by Faith," Ringe, "Gentile Woman's Story," 71.

sion in the meals of the church.¹¹⁵ The "great faith" of this woman held up as an example for members of the Matthean community of whom have "little faith" (ὀλιγοπιστία).¹¹⁶

The Woman Who Anoints Jesus at a Meal (Matt 26:6–7)

Matthew also includes, with select changes, the story of the woman who anoints Jesus.¹¹⁷ Matthew omits from Mark the story of the poor widow who gives "everything" (Mark 12:41–44) and underscores the cost of the perfume in the anointing scene. This may reflect his wealthy urban provenance.¹¹⁸ The identity of the ointment as "spikenard" drops out, and the oil is held to be "very expensive" (βαρύτιμος; Matt 26:7).¹²⁰ Likewise, the act

¹¹⁵ The faith of the centurion also leads to the healing of his son/servant (8:5–13). Thus, it is the faith of these Gentiles, as well as the exceptions made on their behalf, which justify the inclusion of Gentiles in the Matthean community. See Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 188; Allen, *Matthew*, 169; Burkill, "Syro-Phoenician Woman," esp. 175–77; Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 171; *Matthew*, 313; Hasler, "The Incident," 461; Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," Kingsbury, *Matthew*, 51; Neyrey's entire article suggests that this story was justified by the evangelization of Gentiles in spite of the limitation of Jesus' mission to Jews ("Decision Making in the Early Church"). See Ringe, "Gentile Woman," 68; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 330; Smart, "Jesus, the Syro-Phoenician Woman," 116.

¹¹⁶ On the theme of faith in Matthean miracle stories, Luz remarks that Matthew repeatedly orients the healings to the theme of 'faith,' he is speaking to the community about their faith, or their need of it" (Luz, "The Gospel According to Matthew," 107).

¹¹⁷ See pp. 102–6, 121–30. Ronald F. Theimann comments that the relationship between the Markan anointing and the Matthean one leads to neglect of the Matthean redaction of this story. Few scholars mention the Matthean articles on the pericope; Schüssler Fiorenza does not discuss Matthew's in her opening discussion of *In Memory of Her* ("The Unnamed Woman at T^{Today} 44 (1987): 179–88, esp. 183 and n. 11). There is little interest in the portrayal of women. Theimann remarks, however, that "The female follows a more prominent role in Matthew's Gospel than is usually recognized. He too notes the lone article on women in Matthew's Gospel, that of, 'Gender and Reading' ("The Unnamed Woman," 181, n. 8).

¹¹⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 519–20; Elizabeth E. Platt, "The Ministry of Bethany," *T^{Today}* 34 (1977): 29–39, esp. 31.

¹¹⁹ See p. 160, n. 63. Gundry notes that it may be on account of its status as a publican (*Matthew*, 520).

¹²⁰ Following the editors of the UBS, the reading βαρύτιμου should be over πολυτίμου. It is supported by B W and Byzantine text types, at Matthean insertion of βαρύς in Matt 23: 4, 23 (Allen, *Matthew*, 268).

of the cost of the ointment ("over 300 denarii" [Mark 14:5]) is shortened to "a large sum" or "for much" (πολλοῦ; Matt 26:9). Matthew also stresses and clarifies the connection of the anointing to the burial of Jesus (Matt 26:12).¹²¹ Plainly, the requisite anointing for burial is properly done by the unnamed woman in chapter 26. In Matthew the women do not take spices to the tomb (Matt 28:1).¹²²

By clarifying the connection between the anointing and the burial, a connection which the unnamed woman understands, Matthew draws attention to the disciples' lack of understanding at the meal. Matthew writes that the "disciples" (μαθηταί; Matt 26:8) silently object to the woman's deed, Mark makes an indefinite reference to "some."¹²³ It is therefore the woman, not the disciples, who understands the true nature of Jesus' messiahship (i.e., that he is to die).¹²⁴ In this instance, it is the woman who understands Jesus' previous discussions of his upcoming Passion. The other disciples, even Peter, will continue to waver in their faith.¹²⁵ Moreover, Matthew emphasizes that the woman's action is a "work" (or "deed" [ἔργον]) done on behalf of Jesus: "She has done a good work [ἔργον καλόν] for me [εἰς ἐμέ]" (Matt 26:10).¹²⁶ This links the

Matthew, 520).

¹²¹David Daube, "The Anointing at Bethany and Jesus' Burial," *ATR* 32 (1950): 186–99, esp. 193ff.; Elliott, "The Anointing of Jesus," 107; Legault, "Anointings in Galilee and Bethany," 142; Platt, "Mary of Bethany," 31; Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 183.

¹²²Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 315; Daube, "The Anointing at Bethany," 193; Elliott, "The Anointing of Jesus," 106; Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 183.

¹²³Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 314; Gundry, *Matthew*, 520; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 487.

¹²⁴Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 17–18; Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 183.

¹²⁵The portrayal of the disciples in Matthew is a topic of debate. Suffice it for now to say that Matthew does not portray the disciples as completely lacking understanding, as he often omits Markan references to their lack of belief. Moreover, they are often made to understand aspects of Jesus' teaching which they at first fail to grasp by Jesus' own instruction. However, at the same time the disciples are often characterized as those with "little faith." It is the women who remain faithful until the time of Jesus' crucifixion and wait patiently at the tomb. This is in contrast to the men who are unable to stay awake while Jesus prays in the garden and desert him after his arrest. Even Peter denies that he knows Jesus (and he does so to two female slaves). See Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 180–83; Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 107; Mark Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship in Matthew and Luke," *BTB* 3 (1973): 235–55, esp. 247ff. and discussion below.

¹²⁶Matthew gives emphasis to the woman's action as a "work" by moving the

woman's deed to the good "works" of Jesus/Wisdom (Matt 1 and relates her deed to Christian service (διακονία).¹²⁸ All in the community is inadvertently done on behalf of Jesus (25:23–46). Peter's mother-in-law (Matt 8:14–15) and the other women around Jesus (Matt 27:55–56) are the only other minister (διακονέω) directly to Jesus himself.¹²⁹ All who express this kind of service are women, including the unnamed who anoints Jesus. Accordingly, Matthew emphasizes the ineness of this woman's discipleship,¹³⁰ just as he emphasizes "faith" (πίστις) of the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21–28) πόρναι who "believe" (πιστεύω), in contrast to others who (Matt 21:31–32).

Furthermore, given the inclusion of women in other scenes, the anointing story in Matthew acquires additional significance in the context of his Gospel. There is no reason to think that this woman is not part of the dining company. The individual expressed by others at the meal is not on account of her presence, but is truly in this case on account of the waste perfume. The unnamed woman's presence at the meal is a deed and her action is held up as an example to all. Thus, the deed woman exemplifies the essence of the message of Matthew's Gospel.¹³¹ Wherever "this Gospel [i.e., Matthew's]¹³² is proclaimed

reference to ἔργον forward. See Grassi, *Hidden Heroes*, 77; Gundry, *Matthew*

¹²⁷Matthew changed Q's ending to the "Children in the Marketplace" by substituting "works" for "children" (τέκνα). In Matthew, Wisdom's "deed" back to the miracles done by Jesus in chs. 5–7, 8–9 and 10. See Cotter, in the Marketplace," 292–93; Kloppenborg, *Formation of Q*, 110, n. 36. The frequent use of ἔργον leads Gundry to remark, "Above all, Matthew emphasizes doing of good works before men (*sic*)" (*Matthew*, 6–7). Crosby notes on this "People are blessed (11:6) when their work imitates Jesus' works (11:2) directed to resource the needs of others (25:31–46)" (*House of Disciples*, 118).

¹²⁸Grassi, *Hidden Heroes*, 76–77. Crosby notes in this pericope that the "good work" of the woman is in response to a projected need of Jesus, anointed for his burial (*House of Disciples*, 118).

¹²⁹See pp. 172–77.

¹³⁰Crosby, *House of Disciples*, 118.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 119.

¹³²In a final addition, Matthew modifies the two occurrences of "gospel" with "this." See Grassi, *Hidden Heroes*, 78; Gundry, *Matthew*, 522; T. "Unnamed Woman," 184–85. In Matthew the term "gospel" refers to that which is preached, particularly the "gospel of the Kingdom" which is to be preached 'out the whole world' (see Matt 4:23; 9:35; 10:1) (Kingsbury, *Matthew*:

have been with Jesus and his disciples at meals throughout the narrative; consequently, there is no reason to suggest that Matthew intends by this choice of preposition to exclude them from the period of the Galilean ministry.

**ἀκολουθεῖω*, a technical term in Matthew for the activity of a disciple,¹³⁷ characterizes the women here as “followers” of Jesus (i.e., as disciples).¹³⁸ This interpretation of Matthew’s use of *ἀκολουθεῖω* to refer to the women is supported by the ascensive use of *καί* in 27:57: “When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was *also* a disciple [*μῆτρεῖω*] of Jesus.”¹³⁹ The “also” continues a thought from the previous sentence and thus refers back to the immediately mentioned group, the women in 27:55–56. Joseph of Arimathea is a disciple, as are the women who “follow” Jesus in the fashion of disciples. Likewise, the women are models of discipleship in that they “minister” (*διακονέω*) to Jesus. Because all ministry (*διακονία*) and Christian service are inadvertently directed toward Jesus (Matt 25:31–46), these women serve as examples of Matthean ministry.¹⁴⁰ In this regard, they are like other women in the narrative who have “ministered” to Jesus, such as Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt 8:14–15) and the unnamed woman who anoints Jesus (Matt 26:6–13).¹⁴¹ The large numbers of women pictured here and the presence of women throughout his narrative suggest that it is unrealistic that Matthew intends by his choice of words for the reader to assume that they all are Jesus’ personal servants.¹⁴² Moreover, if

¹³⁷ Many scholars contend that in Matthew the term *ἀκολουθεῖω* consistently carries the metaphorical meaning “to come or go after a person as his disciple.” See discussion by Sean Freyne, *The Twelve: Disciples and Apostles. A Study in the Theology of the First Three Gospels* (London and Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 159ff.; Jack Dean Kingsbury, however, attempts to distinguish between metaphorical meanings of *ἀκολουθεῖω* and the simple meaning of literal accompaniment (“The Verb *Ακολουθεῖω* as an Index of Matthew’s View of His Community,” *JBL* 97 [1978]: 56–73).

¹³⁸ So Crosby, *House of Disciples*, 114–15; Gundry, *Matthew*, 578ff.; Theimann, “The Unnamed Woman,” 182.

¹³⁹ So A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan and Co.; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1961), 426. I concur. Others presuppose that the *καί* here is ascensive, but it does not affect their subsequent discussions of the women. See Gundry, *Matthew*, 580; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 517; Anderson makes this suggestion (following McNeile), but rejects it (“Gender and Reading,” 20).

¹⁴⁰ See previous section pp. 174–76.

¹⁴¹ Grassi, *Hidden Heroes*, 78–79.

¹⁴² In contrast to Anderson, “Gender and Reading,” 19. Here Anderson somewhat reluctantly follows Kingsbury who writes: “In 27:55, Matthew, like Mark (15:41), employs *akolouthēin* in the literal and local sense of accompaniment from

this story may be recalled “in memory of her” rather than Jesus (Matt 26:13).

The Women Who Follow and Serve (Matt 27:55–56)

Like the other Synoptics, Matthew includes a reference to the women who are present for Jesus’ crucifixion. Matthew records that “many women” watched the crucifixion from a distance. This behavior contrasts that of the men, who flee following the arrest. Like Mark, Matthew records that these women “followed” (*ἀκολουθεῖω*) and “ministered” (*διακονέω*) to Jesus. Matthew enhances the position of these women as disciples.

Matthew begins by moving to the fore Mark’s comment that a large group of women gathered for the crucifixion: “There were also many women (*γυναῖκες πολλαί*) there, looking on from afar” (27:55). Here Matthew moves *πολλαί* forward from Mark 15:41b.¹³³ Matthew underscores the position of these women by using an emphatic *αἵτινες* in place of the Markan *αἱ*.¹³⁴ These are the same women “who had followed [*ἀκολουθεῖω*] Jesus from Galilee, ministering [*διακονέω*] to him” (27:55b). Among these many women are those named Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (27:56).¹³⁵ That they followed Jesus “from” (*ἀπό*) Galilee (not “in” [*ἐν*] as in Mark 15:41) does not necessarily limit their time with Jesus to his journey to Jerusalem.¹³⁶ Women

Christology and Kingdom, 128ff.). However, Theimann points out that the memorial to the woman spoken of in 26:13 is accomplished when Matthew’s *Gospel narrative* reaches the whole world. Given the egalitarian emphasis found only in Matthew’s Gospel, I agree. Kingsbury also writes in regard to the use of “this gospel” in 26:13: “In 26:13 we have evidence that in Matthew’s community the term ‘gospel’ embraces not merely traditions of logia of Jesus but traditions of narratives about him as well. In light of this, we have good reason to believe that in the mind of Matthew the expression ‘the [this] Gospel of the Kingdom’ can properly be explicated only in terms of the subject matter of the entire document” (*Matthew: Structure, Christology and Kingdom*, 130–31).

¹³³ Allen, *Matthew*, 297; Gundry, *Matthew*, 578; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 517.

¹³⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 578.

¹³⁵ Matthew omits the reference to Salome and changes Josies to Joseph. The “mother of James and Joseph” is Mary, the mother of Jesus (Gundry, *Matthew*, 579).

¹³⁶ Gundry suggests that Matthew’s emphasis serves to underscore the nature of Christian ministry (*Matthew*, 578); Schweizer argues that the women only join Jesus for the journey to Jerusalem (*Matthew*, 518).

those who are to be disciples are to "follow" Jesus to the point of "taking up" their cross (Matt 16:24ff.), it is noteworthy that only the women follow Jesus to the cross; the rest of the disciples do not.¹⁴³ Neither are the women frozen with fear at the tomb (Matt 28:8); rather they worship the risen Lord without doubt and joyfully report the resurrection (Matt 28:8-9).¹⁴⁴ The rest of the disciples will worship, but some will doubt (Matt 28:17).¹⁴⁵ Such an attitude of worship which recognizes Jesus as "Lord" is a hallmark of true discipleship in Matthew's Gospel.¹⁴⁶

This analysis of the women in Matthew 27:55-56 fits well within Matthew's broader concept of "discipleship." Although scholars have suggested that the category of "disciples" excludes women,¹⁴⁷ many now suggest that the Matthean understanding of "disciples" encompasses a larger group than previously thought.¹⁴⁸ In particular, the group of "disciples" is not limited to the Twelve.¹⁴⁹ True, women

place to place. . . . The appended notation that they were 'waiting on him' is not meant to characterize them as disciples of Jesus in the strict sense of the word but instead explains why they had been in his company" ("The Verb *akolouthēin* as an Index of Matthew's View of His Community," *JBL* 97 [1978]: 61). So also Albright and Mann who translate *διακονέω* "looked after" in Matt 28:55 (*Matthew*, 349). Matthew's emphasis is in contrast to the "ministry" of the women in Mark, who do seem to be primarily "table servants." Still, even in Mark, these female "servants" are examples of discipleship for the Markan community (See ch. 3).

¹⁴³ If the "ministry" of the women is limited to the journey to the cross (Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 19; possibly Gundry, *Matthew*, 579), then they are here depicted as "an example of Christian ministry to the persecuted" (Gundry, *Matthew*, 579). The point that the women are an example of Christian ministry remains. See also Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 182.

¹⁴⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 590-91; Cynthia Jarvis, "Matthew 28:1-10," *Interpretation* 42 (1988): 63-68, esp. 64.

¹⁴⁵ Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 181, n. 7.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹⁴⁷ Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 20; Kingsbury, *Akolouthēin*, 61.

¹⁴⁸ This perspective views the "disciples" as a character group rather than a number limited to the Twelve or to men. See Crosby, *House of Disciples*, 114; Freyne, *The Twelve*, 152ff., 186ff.; Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 99-101; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 247ff.; Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 108-83. Anderson, while she limits the "disciples" to a smaller all-male group, discusses the options ("Gender and Reading," 20-21). A recent discussion of *μαθητής* in Matthew may be found in Michael J. Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel as Reflected in the Use of the Term Μαθητής* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

¹⁴⁹ Luz notes that the total affect of Matthean redaction is to reduce the total references to "the Twelve." According to Luz, Matthew is aware of the identification of "the Twelve" with the disciples, but it is unimportant to him ("Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 99); Schweizer suggests there is a distinction between

are not called "disciples" in Matthew,¹⁵⁰ but in a more general sense, women do meet the criteria for being "disciples," a larger group also identified as the "little ones"¹⁵¹ as well as "brothers and sisters."¹⁵²

First, women are depicted in Matthew as appropriately calling Jesus by the christological title "Lord" (κύριος). This is a frequent title used by "disciples" in Matthew's narrative.¹⁵³ The Canaanite woman calls Jesus by this title (Matt 15:22, 25). Moreover, women also offer Jesus the worship which corresponds to such a title and are depicted "worshipping" (προσκυνέω) at Jesus' feet (Matt 15:25; 28:9). By worshipping Jesus in this manner, they also show themselves to be his true disciples.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, women such as the Canaanite woman are held up as examples of "faith" (πίστις). The "courtesans" (πόρναι) who join Jesus' following from John's are also those who "believe" (πιστεύω) and therefore enter the kingdom of God (Matt 21:31-32). Such "belief" or "faith" (πίστις) is a primary quality of a disciple in Matthew,¹⁵⁵ as is the acceptance of the "kingdom" (βασιλεία).¹⁵⁶ Indeed, the great faith of these women is sometimes contrasted to the "little faith" (ὀλιγοπιστία) of the male disciples.¹⁵⁷

The Twelve of the historical past in Matthew's narrative and a secondary notion that these historical "disciples" are examples for Matthew's church. Thus, through the "transparency" of the disciples, the Matthean church is disclosed ("Matthew's Church," 136-37); Sheridan assumes this throughout "Disciples and Discipleship."

¹⁵⁰ Anderson, "Gender and Reading," 20; Kingsbury, *Akolouthēin*, 61.

¹⁵¹ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 165ff. Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 110-11; Eduard Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, ed. Graham Stanton (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; London: SPCK, 1983), 129-55, esp. 138-39; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 250-51.

¹⁵² The plural ὀδὲλαφοί may be accurately translated "brothers and sisters." This is particularly true in Mark and Matthew, considering Mark 3:34 and Matt 12:49. In Matthew Jesus points to "the disciples" and declares, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt 12:49-50; NRSV). On the identification of the group "disciples" with "brothers" in Matthew, see Freyne, *The Twelve*, 158, 167; Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 109-10; Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 135; Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 138-39; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 249, n. 15.

¹⁵³ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 163-64; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 246-48.

¹⁵⁴ Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 246-47.

¹⁵⁵ Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 107; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 247ff.; Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 181.

¹⁵⁶ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 153; Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew," 109.

¹⁵⁷ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 199, 202-4; Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 180-81.

Unlike others in the narrative, women also live out their faith in that they "minister" (διακονέω) to Jesus. Such self-giving "service" (διακονία) is also a primary concern of Matthean discipleship.¹⁵⁸ Finally, women, like the men, are given a place at the dinner table, the classic location of learning (μανθάνω/μαθητεῖω) in the ancient world.¹⁵⁹ The "disciples" in Matthew are considered a "transparent" group to be equated with Christians in Matthew's community.¹⁶⁰ It may therefore be argued that Matthew's category of discipleship allows for a degree of egalitarian treatment of the women in that community as well.

Such egalitarianism is consistent with the most current scholarly characterization of Matthew's community. In recent years, it has been suggested that Matthew adheres to an anti-hierarchical, egalitarian ecclesiology.¹⁶¹ All disciples are disciples equally—even Peter, being the "first among equals."¹⁶² The notion of Matthew's non-hierarchical stance is derived primarily from 23:8–12:

But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher [διδάσκαλος], and you are all students [ἀδελφοί]. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you shall be your servant [δίακονος]; All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted (NRSV).

¹⁵⁸ Matt 18:1ff.; 23:6ff.; Grassi, *Hidden Heroes*, 76–77; Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 136ff.

¹⁵⁹ See pp. 17–19, 138.

¹⁶⁰ Luz, "Disciples in the Gospel According to Matthew." Luz writes: "The verb *matheteuō* functions as transparency to make discipleship in the Gospel illuminate the evangelist's own day" (p. 109). Although Sheridan cautions against completely identifying the disciples in Matthew with the Matthean Christian community, he considers the Matthean disciples to be "exemplary for Christians" ("Disciples and Discipleship," 249). Overman concurs with Luz on the "transparency" of the disciples in his book, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, 124ff. Schweizer also sees the disciples as "transparent" for the Matthean church ("Matthew's Church," 136–37).

¹⁶¹ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 206; E. Krentz, "Community and Character: Matthew's Vision of the Church," Paper presented at national meeting of the SBL, New Orleans, La., November 1990; Dennis Duling, "Response to Krentz" (with modifications); Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 122ff.; Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 139ff.; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 251–52.

¹⁶² Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Figure of Peter in Matthew's Gospel as a Theological Problem," *JBL* 98 (1979): 67–83, esp. 71; Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 136.

Thus, Matthew advocates a church structure which does not depend on developed ecclesiastical orders or church hierarchy.¹⁶³ Rather, Matthew's community is modeled after a "household." However, this Matthean "household," in spite of the social stratification associated with such a structure, allows for a degree of egalitarianism.¹⁶⁴ The Matthean church is made up of "little ones" who are all equally disciples, all equally capable of "following" Jesus. Even those who are leaders in the community must seek to be as the "least" of the "little ones."¹⁶⁵ Even leaders remain "learners."¹⁶⁶ In his recent book, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*, Overman writes: "Leaders, teachers and other positions are all a part of the Matthean community. Ideally, Matthew would have the members fulfill their roles in a way that does not disrupt the egalitarian spirit which should pervade the community."¹⁶⁷ Thus, there is a tension within Matthew's ecclesiology, given his egalitarian ideology, that coexists with the identification of his community with the structure of a household.

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, the entire world is to be "discipled."¹⁶⁸ Thus, the Eleven are instructed to "Go therefore and make disciples [μαθητεῖω] of all nations [πάντα τὰ ἔθνη]" (Matt 28:19). "All nations" clearly includes Gentiles. Since Gentile women associated with harlotry foreshadow this future influx of Gentile "disciples" at the very beginning of Matthew's Gospel (Matt 1:1–16),¹⁶⁹ it is unquestionable that women are included in the perimeter of Matthean discipleship proclaimed at the end.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ So Krentz; Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 122ff.; Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 139ff.; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 251–52.

¹⁶⁴ Crosby, *House of Disciples*.

¹⁶⁵ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 165–66; Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 138–39; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 251–52.

¹⁶⁶ Freyne, *The Twelve*, 206; Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 134ff.; Sheridan, "Disciples and Discipleship," 251.

¹⁶⁷ Overman, *Matthew's Gospel*, 124.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 128; Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 141.

¹⁶⁹ So Theimann, "The Unnamed Woman," 186. See also pp. 147–52.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 185. Freyne asserts that "In trying to discover Matthew's ideas on discipleship, the best starting point is the manifesto at the end of his gospel" (*The Twelve*, 152). (See also 153–54).

Women and Meals in Matthew's Gospel: Some Conclusions

This analysis of the Gospel of Matthew, which takes into consideration women and meal imagery in his narrative, produces striking results. Matthew, the Gospel considered the most androcentric of the four, is the only Synoptic Gospel which portrays women reclining with men for meals. Only in Matthew are women allowed a place at the table. Women and children join the men for the miraculous feedings, which Matthew characterizes as Eucharistic feasts enjoyed by the Matthean church. Thus, Matthew portrays an egalitarian community which gathers together for meals like a household and awaits the messianic banquet. Even the future kingly meal with the Messiah is akin to a wedding, the kind of family celebration for which even young unmarried women prepare. Women who "follow" Jesus meet the Matthean criteria for discipleship, and many are even held up as examples of true faith and Christian service.

The slander leveled against ancient religious and philosophical groups which enjoyed mixed gender dining underscores Matthew's mention of the presence of women accused of promiscuity as members of Jesus' own group and, by inference, his own. Only Matthew embraces such sectarian slander and records that Jesus' group inherits "courtesans" who were previously disciples of John the Baptist. Furthermore, Matthew includes Gentile women associated with harlotry in his genealogy and later narratives. "Sinners," a group including women, join Jesus and his disciples for meals. Given that early Christian groups were often accused of welcoming promiscuous women and suspected of partaking of lecherous nocturnal "love feasts," Matthew's bold affirmation of the presence of "sinners" and "courtesans" among Jesus' dining company is a significant rhetorical statement. By doing so it is possible that Matthew further betrays his penchant for an anti-hierarchical egalitarian ecclesiology, an ecclesiology which likens the church to an equal gathering of "little ones" or a household of "brothers and sisters." Matthew's understanding of the church as a "household" does not result in an emphasis on traditional gender roles. Thus, his call to disciple "all nations" is gender and class-inclusive.

Finally, there is reason to suspect that Matthew might have inherited this egalitarian aspect of his ecclesiology from an earlier source, namely Q. The pericope concerning "courtesans" comes from a layer of tradition that deals with the relationship of Jesus to John.

If there is indeed a trajectory from Q to Matthew which allows for the merging of the Q community into Matthew's own,¹⁷¹ then part of Matthew's "own" traditions might have included the characterization of Jesus and John as Cynics who welcomed women into their circles. Future scholarship on Q 7 may well shed light on the possibility that Q included a reference to "courtesans." Thus, the observation that Matthew includes women in his meal scenes and embraces the term "courtesans" (πόρναι) for women in his community could have great significance not only for Matthean studies generally, but for studies of the historical Jesus as well.

¹⁷¹As is now suggested. James M. Robinson, "The Q Trajectory: Between John and Matthew via Jesus," in *The Future of Early Christianity. Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. Birger A. Pearson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 173-94.