

## JESUS: GLUTTON AND DRUNKARD?

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### ABSTRACT

The basic premise is that Jesus had a reputation for arriving at meals uninvited, thus provoking the accusations cited in Lk. 7.34 and Mt. 11.19. His table fellowship with toll collectors and sinners is viewed in light of ancient hospitality traditions, and with reference to Lk. 15.1-2; Mk 2.14-17; Lk. 19.1-10; and Lk. 6.27-36. It is argued that true hospitality involves welcoming outsiders, and that the toll collectors' hospitality to Jesus demonstrates their reformation, and is salvific. In contrast, the so-called 'sinners' accompanying Jesus gain entry to earthly meals, and the heavenly banquet, 'in Jesus' name'. Attention is drawn to the centrality of hospitality, commensality, and humility in the gospel, and the importance of Abraham as a role model.

Key words: historical Jesus, hospitality, commensality, table fellowship, Graeco-Roman, meals, uninvited guests, outsiders, toll collectors, sinners, salvation, Synoptic Gospels

The fundamental premise of this paper is that the historical Jesus typically arrived at meals uninvited, i.e. ἄκλητος.<sup>1</sup> The main text behind this idea is Lk. 7.34 and parallel Mt. 11.19, in which Jesus implies he has been labelled a 'glutton and drunkard'. These epithets are usually understood as opposition slander,<sup>2</sup> but

1. This concept was the basis for my papers at the Society of Biblical Literature international meetings in 1997 (Lausanne) and 1999 (Helsinki/Lahti). The present paper is a slightly modified version of my presentation at the Society of Biblical Literature international meeting in Cambridge, UK, on 23 July 2003. It is based on my thesis 'Jesus and the Banquets: An Investigation of the Early Christian Tradition concerning Jesus' Presence at Banquets with Toll Collectors and Sinners' (PhD dissertation, Murdoch University, 2002), especially on ch. 5, 'Jesus, Toll Collectors, and Sinners', pp. 165-220.

2. On the topic of slanderous remarks by Jesus' detractors, see esp. J.D.G. Dunn, 'Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus', in J. Neusner *et al.* (eds.), *The Social World of Formative*

their connection with Jesus' reputation as an ἄκλητος requires further consideration, and examination of relevant texts, particularly the missionary discourses and the *Didache*.<sup>3</sup> These provide important insights on the itinerant lifestyle of some early disciples, and their reliance on the hospitality of householders. Even though the sending out of disciples as depicted in the Gospels may be fictional, we can surely assume that in their dependency on householders, Jesus' followers were emulating his own practice.

In Lk. 7.34 and Mt. 11.19, the 'glutton and drunkard' accusation occurs with the remark that Jesus is a *friend* (φίλος) of toll collectors and sinners.<sup>4</sup> In view of its context, the term φίλος here can legitimately be interpreted to mean 'commensal', especially as this coheres with the reference in Mk 2.15-17<sup>5</sup> to Jesus' table fellowship with such people. In fact, Jesus' commensality, particularly in relation to those two groups, is the primary focus of this paper. My approach to the topic is novel, not only in the identification of Jesus as an ἄκλητος, but also in the discernment of a difference in the characterization of the groups (toll collectors and sinners), who are portrayed as being at table with him.

### *Ancient Hospitality Traditions*

In the ancient world, *hospitality* was understood in the limited sense of showing friendship toward strangers, as reflected in the Greek term φιλοξενία, which means literally *love of foreigners, strangers, or enemies*.<sup>6</sup> The hospitality ethic was firmly established in the Mediterranean region, and both Yahweh and Zeus were believed to offer specific protection to strangers and itinerants. It was expected that failure to welcome strangers would incur divine wrath, while, conversely, generous hospitality would attract blessings. This principle is well illustrated in the Old Testament stories concerning Abraham's welcome to the divine envoys (Gen. 18), and the retribution wrought upon Sodom as punishment

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*Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 264-89 (276-80).

3. See Mk 6.6b-13; Mt. 9.35; 10.1-14; Lk. 9.1-6; 10.1-16; *Did.* 12.2-5 (travellers); 11.1-2 (itinerant teachers); 11.4-12 (itinerant apostles and prophets).

4. I concur with the scholarly consensus that the τελώναι with whom Jesus is associated in the Synoptic Gospels are *toll* collectors rather than *tax* gatherers, i.e. the term refers to persons authorized to collect *indirect* taxes such as customs duties, or to their employees. See J.R. Donahue, 'Tax Collectors and Sinners: An Attempt at Identification', *CBQ* 33 (1971), pp. 39-61 (59); *idem*, 'Tax Collector', in *ABD*, VI, pp. 337-38 (337); O. Michel, 'τελώνης', in *TDNT*, VIII, pp. 88-105 (89, 103); S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian: 323 BCE to 135 CE: A Study of Second Temple Judaism* (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1980), p. 192.

5. And in parallels Lk. 5.29-32; Mt. 9.10-13 (assuming the identity of Levi and Matthew).

6. See J. Koenig, 'Hospitality', in *ABD*, III, pp. 299-301 (299).

for their inhospitality (Gen. 19).<sup>7</sup> The evident dichotomy between hospitality and inhospitality is underscored by New Testament passages such as the missionary discourses<sup>8</sup> and Mt. 25.31-46, which describe the severe punishment in store for those who do not welcome itinerants.<sup>9</sup>

7. Although Sodom was often associated with sexual immorality in Jewish literature, it was linked above all with the violation of hospitality mores. See J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 416; Ezek. 16.49; Wis. 19.13-15; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.194-195.

8. See esp. Lk. 10.8-16; Mt. 10.11-15 re the consequences of failing to welcome the Christian missionaries.

9. There is continuing controversy over interpretation of the latter passage. Scholars are generally agreed that πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in v. 32 refers to all peoples, i.e. including Jews, Christians, and Gentiles. See e.g. R.H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2nd edn, 1994), p. 511; W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*. III. XIX-XXVIII (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), p. 422; M.E. Boring, 'The Gospel of Matthew: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections', in *NIB*, VIII (1994), pp. 87-505 (456); J.P. Meier, *Matthew* (New Testament Message, 3; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980), p. 303; J. Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure: The Parables in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs, 10; Louvain: Peeters Press, 1991), pp. 275-76; E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (trans. D.E. Green; London: SPCK, 1976), p. 476; but cf. D.J. Harrington, who interprets 'all the nations' as Gentiles (*The Gospel of Matthew* [Sacra Pagina, 1; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991], p. 358). On the other hand, the judgment itself is evidently of individuals (see esp. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, p. 512; Boring, 'Gospel of Matthew', p. 456). Yet scholars remain divided over the meaning of 'the least of these my brothers and sisters' in v. 40. Many consider that the phrase refers to all Christians/disciples (e.g. Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 357; D.A. Hagner, *Matthew*. II. 14-28 [WBC, 33B; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1995], p. 745), while some believe it encompasses only Christian missionaries (e.g. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, p. 514; C.S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999], p. 605). The view that Christians are implied is predicated on the fact that, elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus identifies his disciples as siblings (Mt. 12.48-49; 28.10; 23.8) (see Hagner, *Matthew*, II, p. 744). The idea that the terminology is applicable only to missionaries is linked particularly to Mt. 10.40-42, which occurs within Matthew's narrative concerning the sending of the Twelve, and refers to the apostles as 'these little ones' (v. 42). Here too, in v. 40, Jesus identifies himself with those who are welcomed, in a manner reminiscent of Mt. 25.40 (Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, p. 277; Hagner, *Matthew*, II, p. 745). Nevertheless, there are persuasive arguments that the ἄδελφοί in Mt 25.40 are to be understood as *all* the needy, even though Matthew appears to focus particular attention on Christian missionaries (Boring, 'Gospel of Matthew', p. 456). Proponents of this view include: A.J. Hultgren (*The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* [The Bible in Its World; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000], pp. 318-26); Davies and Allison (*Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, III, pp. 428-30); Meier (*Matthew*, p. 304); Lambrecht (*Out of the Treasure*, pp. 276-79); and Boring ('Gospel of Matthew', p. 456). Their position is appropriately expressed in the words of W.J.C. Weren: 'Adelphoi... is applied by Matthew both to people who commit themselves to Jesus and to people to whom Jesus

The hostility sometimes shown toward uninvited guests is perhaps explicable in view of the increasing numbers seeking sustenance from the wealthy, particularly in fourth-century Greece,<sup>10</sup> to the extent that the παράσιτος became a stock figure in comedy—the parasite or flatterer.<sup>11</sup> However, uninvited extras were not necessarily undesirable. The presence of distinguished or engaging guests at table brought the host honour, and unexpected guests could therefore prove beneficial. In the Graeco-Roman world these would frequently have included a relative or friend of an *invited* guest, since it was considered appropriate to bring along such associates without notice.<sup>12</sup> They were termed *umbrae*, i.e. *shadows*.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, in the New Testament period, various types—desirable or otherwise—might arrive at meals uninvited, and my thesis is that Jesus had a reputation for doing so. That explains why his detractors would refer to him slanderously as a ‘glutton and drunkard’, because these terms were precisely applicable to the stereotypical parasite of comedy.<sup>14</sup> This is not to suggest, of course, that Jesus

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commits himself. This last group of people cannot be reduced to the first’ (cited in Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, p. 276).

10. See B. Fehr, ‘Entertainers at the *Symposion*: The *Akletoi* in the Archaic Period’, in O. Murray (ed.), *Symptica: A Symposium on the Symposium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 185–95 (188); Ernst Wüst, ‘Parasitos’, Section 2, ‘Der Schmarotzer an den Tischen der Reichen’, in A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, et al. (eds.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, XVIII.IV (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1893–1963), pp. 1381–97 (1384).

11. The term παράσιτος, deriving from the verb παρσιτέω, means basically *one who eats at the table of another*. However, it has acquired negative connotations from the stereotype of comedy, and no doubt also as a result of parasites’ abuse of hospitality in real life. See ‘παρσιτέω’ and ‘παράσιτος’, in H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon* (London: Oxford University Press, rev. edn, 1940, with 1968 supplement) [hereafter referred to as LSJ], p. 1323.

12. See Suetonius, *Claud.* 35.1; Horace, *Sat.* 2.4.17–19; 2.8.22; Plato, *Symp.* 174A–B; Plutarch, *Mor.* 708B. Re the reputation of the Cyreneans for bringing multiple uninvited friends, see Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 12.510a, here quoting Alexis, b. c. 375–d. c. 275 BCE.

13. W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14* (SNTSMS, 85; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 55; J. D’Arms, ‘The Roman *convivium* and the Idea of Equality’, in Murray, *Symptica*, pp. 308–20 (318).

14. Wüst, ‘Parasitos’, pp. 1382, 1388; Fehr, ‘Entertainers’, p. 186, esp. nn. 6, 8, 9. In recent references to the accusation, scholarly research has focused mainly on Jesus’ table fellowship practices, his relationship with John, and the motif of feasting vs. fasting. See e.g. J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. II. *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994), pp. 127, 131, 144–63, 447–50, 504 n. 216, 965–66; D.E. Smith, ‘The Historical Jesus at Table’, *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1989 (SBLSP, 28; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 466–86 (477–80); *idem*, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), pp. 235–36; K.E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), pp. 89, 130–33, 152–58; K.E. Corley, *Women and the Historical Jesus:*

resembled such characters in any way other than by arriving unexpectedly as an itinerant. I employ the umbrella term ἄκλητοι to refer to the various groups who might be present at a meal without a formal invitation. As well as strangers, wayfarers, and *umbræ*, this collective term includes any groups not normally invited to banquets, for example women; children; servants/slaves; outcasts such as lepers; and the poor and disabled.<sup>15</sup>

The question is sometimes raised as to how ἄκλητοι could readily gain entry to meals in private homes. Relevant New Testament situations are: firstly, the woman who anointed Jesus while he reclined at table;<sup>16</sup> and secondly, Paul's remark in 1 Cor. 14.23 concerning the likelihood of 'outsiders' coming into a gathering of believers, presumably meeting in a house church. There are two points to be made in this regard. The first is that recent research indicates that by the early to mid-first century, affluent homes in Palestine were likely to resemble the open-plan dwellings of Pompeii,<sup>17</sup> rather than the classical Greek architectural style, in which the ἀνδρῶν (dining hall)<sup>18</sup> tended to be tucked away.<sup>19</sup> Such Greek dwellings had been designed to *exclude* outsiders, but in Roman homes the interior and occupants were on display.<sup>20</sup> According to the architect Vitruvius, writing in the early Augustan era, anyone could enter not only the vestibule, but

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*Feminist Myths of Christian Origins* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2002), pp. 82-83. I concur that the comparison between John and Jesus, and between fasting and feasting, is a significant feature in the Synoptic Gospels (in Mk 2.18-20 and par. as well as Lk. 7.31-34 and par.), and that it certainly deserves scholarly attention. Nevertheless, I consider Jesus' reputation as an uninvited guest, and consequent characterization as a 'glutton and drunkard', to be historical, and as predating the drawing of a contrast between him and John. I reject the idea that the contrast rests on the identification of John and Jesus as two different types of Cynic—ascetic and hedonistic respectively—as claimed e.g. in R. Cameron, '“What Have You Come Out To See?” Characterizations of John and Jesus in the Gospels', *Semeia* 49 (1990) pp. 35-69 (60).

15. As e.g. in Lk. 14.13.

16. An account of this event occurs in each of the canonical Gospels (Mk 14.3-9; Mt. 26.6-13; Lk. 7.36-50; Jn 12.1-8). I consider that the story has an historical core, but that each of the evangelists has used it for his particular theological purposes. All of the synoptic accounts indicate that the woman arrived at the meal without a formal invitation.

17. See C. Osiek and D.L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (The Family, Religion, and Culture; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), pp. 13-14.

18. See 'ἀνδρῶν', in LSJ, p. 129.

19. I. Nielsen, 'Royal Banquets: The Development of Royal Banquets and Banqueting Halls from Alexander to the Tetrarchs', in I. Nielsen and H.S. Nielsen (eds.), *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity, 1; Oxford: Aarhus University Press, 1998), pp. 102-33 (107, 109).

20. See Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, pp. 24, 231 n. 69, citing A. Wallace-Hadrill. Note that some scholars dispute Wallace-Hadrill's views on this subject, but they are accepted by Osiek and Balch (*Families in the New Testament World*, p. 16) and in the present paper.

also the atrium and peristyle of a dwelling. In other words, visitors/strangers could go right into the living area of a household with or without an invitation.<sup>21</sup> The second relevant point is that careful examination of the missionary discourses leaves one with the impression that the practice of the apostles was indeed to go right into a house before requesting the householder's hospitality.<sup>22</sup> In each of the narratives, reference to *entering* the house is given priority; if there is a greeting of peace,<sup>23</sup> it is to the *house* rather than the *householder*, and it occurs before there is any mention of reception or rejection by the potential host. Thus we can envisage a scenario that is consistent with what Bailey describes as typical in that context: 'the doors are open and the uninvited are free to wander in'.<sup>24</sup> The idea that the missionaries and others actually entered into homes as uninvited guests also coheres with my reading of several synoptic passages in which the action takes place inside a dwelling.<sup>25</sup>

Our insights on ancient hospitality will be of value now as we consider Jesus' table fellowship with toll collectors and so-called 'sinners'.

### *Jesus' Commensality*

#### *The Toll Collectors and Sinners*

The characterization of Jesus as an ἄκλητος means that he is to be regarded both in Gospel depictions of his table fellowship, and at the eschatological banquet, as *guest* rather than *host*.<sup>26</sup> In relation to this point, we need to look closely at Lk. 15.1-2. Verse 1 most likely implies that it was the *custom* of the toll collectors and sinners to come and listen to Jesus' teaching, rather than that a specific occasion was in view.<sup>27</sup> According to the traditional interpretation, the term 'sinners' in v. 2 includes both the groups cited in v. 1, i.e. toll collectors as well as 'sinners'.<sup>28</sup> Hence v. 2 is usually read as meaning that Jesus welcomes

21. Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, pp. 17, 228 n. 35.

22. See Mk 6.10; Mt. 10.12-13; Lk. 9.4; 10.5.

23. Mt. 10.12; Lk. 10.5.

24. K.E. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 5, in discussion on Lk. 7.36-50.

25. E.g. Mk. 7.24-30; 14.3-9 and synoptic parallels; and Lk. 16.19-26. In the last example, I interpret the term πυλῶν as a *portal* or *vestibule* (rather than a *gate*, as it is usually rendered), and see Lazarus as an ἄκλητος who has been placed inside the house by friends in the expectation that he will receive care and sustenance.

26. In my view, Jesus is a guest, not the host, at the Last Supper also.

27. See J. Nolland, *Luke*. II. 9:21-18:34 (WBC, 35B; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), p. 770, re the use of the periphrastic imperfect of ἐγγίζω.

28. E.g. see Green, who considers the ἁμαρτωλούς in v. 2 as synecdoche for οἱ τελῶναι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί in v. 1 (*Gospel of Luke*, p. 571 n. 201), and likewise that in Lk. 7.29, *toll collectors* includes *sinners* (*Gospel of Luke*, p. 570 n. 195).

members of both groups to his table, thus provoking the wrath of the Pharisees and scribes. However, I take a different view, based on my contentions that Jesus is not a host, and that προσδέχεται in v. 2 applies only to the 'sinners', not the toll collectors. The verb is usually translated here as *welcomes* or *receives*, and this perhaps reinforces the erroneous idea of Jesus as their host. In that light, it is interesting to compare the use of the same verb in Rom. 16.2 and Phil. 2.29. In both of these cases too, προσδέχομαι is usually rendered *welcome*, but *receive hospitably*<sup>29</sup> would capture the sense more appropriately, since Paul's appeal for Phoebe and Epaphroditis to be welcomed warmly is addressed to the entire Christian communities in Rome and Philippi, rather than to a single individual to act as host. Similarly, *receives hospitably* is an appropriate translation of προσδέχεται in Lk. 15.2.<sup>30</sup> It does not necessarily imply that Jesus acts as *host* to the sinners, but merely that his attitude toward them is compassionate and welcoming. Nevertheless, we need to investigate further the precise manner in which Jesus 'welcomes' or 'receives' sinners, and whether his relationships with sinners and toll collectors are different. To this end we will examine the two synoptic passages in which Jesus is depicted as a guest in a toll collector's home: Mk 2.15-17<sup>31</sup> and Lk. 19.1-10.

There are questions as to the historicity of both stories. Many scholars see the combination of the call and banquet scenes in Mark 2 as redactional,<sup>32</sup> and the feast component itself may be composite, with vv. 15-16 possibly created to accommodate an unattached logion now found in v. 17.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Lk. 19.1-10 perhaps merely comprises an expansion of Mk 2.14-17.<sup>34</sup> Yet despite the problems with the two accounts, it is generally accepted that the tradition they preserve is authentic, i.e. that Jesus attended at least one feast at the home of a toll collector, and that other toll collectors, as well as 'sinners', were present.<sup>35</sup>

29. See 'προσδέχομαι', in LSJ, pp. 1505-506 (1505).

30. An interesting parallel for such usage is in 1 Chron. 12.19 in the LXX (12.18 in the NRSV). It describes the situation at Ziklag, where David *received* (προσδέξατο) some Benjaminites and Judahites who avowed their solidarity with him against Saul.

31. I assume that the feast took place in Levi's house, although ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ in v. 15 is ambiguous.

32. E.g. W.O. Walker, 'Jesus and the Tax Collectors', *JBL* 97 (1978), pp. 221-38 (232); Donahue, 'Tax Collectors and Sinners', p. 56 n. 62, following M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), p. 64 n. 1; W.R.G. Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels* (WUNT, 2.97; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), p. 41 n. 72.

33. So R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), pp. 18, 163.

34. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 33-34. But note Dibelius' belief in the story's authenticity (Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, p. 388).

35. See K.E. Corley, 'Jesus' Table Practice: Dining with "Tax Collectors and Sinners," including Women', *SBLSP* 32 (1993), pp. 444-59 (444).

We will first consider Mk 2.14-17, and whether the Lk. 15.2 reference to Jesus' 'reception' of sinners might be relevant to this account.<sup>36</sup> As we saw earlier during discussion about ἄκλητοι, it was customary for associates of an *invited* guest to attend a banquet without a formal invitation. Therefore we may plausibly surmise that some of the disciples, so-called 'sinners',<sup>37</sup> could have obtained entry to Levi's banquet by virtue of their relationship with Jesus. This would not normally be considered inappropriate, and would account for the awkward addition in v. 15b of the phrase: ἦσαν γὰρ πολλοὶ καὶ ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ ('for there were many who followed him' [NRSV]). Further, since προσδέχομαι is used in Lk. 15.2 in regard to Jesus' acceptance of sinners, the notion can be substantiated on the grounds that one of the meanings of this verb is *to guarantee*, or *take a liability upon oneself*.<sup>38</sup> Hence, Jesus can be seen as the guarantor for those accompanying him; in other words, they attend 'in his name'.

The second point of interest is the role played by the toll collector host in each of the stories. Looking at Lk. 19.1-10, we see that the opposition parties refer to Zacchaeus as a 'sinner' (v. 7). Yet in sharp contrast, Jesus affirms that *because* (καθότι) Zacchaeus is a 'son of Abraham', salvation has come to his house (v. 9).<sup>39</sup> The significant point here is in the meaning behind the expression 'son of Abraham'. The epithet does not merely refer back to Lk. 3.7-14, concerning the toll collectors who respond to John, and his warning in v. 8 that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from stones.<sup>40</sup> Rather, the reason for placing Zacchaeus in relationship with the great patriarch is to draw attention to his hospitality to Jesus, and compare it with the Genesis 18 account of Abraham's provision for the heavenly messengers.<sup>41</sup> The hospitality of Abraham and

36. It is noteworthy that there is a strong connection between the latter verse and *Luke's* account of Levi's banquet (5.27-32), with several terms in common, especially the verb [δια]γογγύζω (Nolland, *Luke*, II, p. 770). Only Luke features the *grumbling* in the Levi/Matthew banquet story (5.30). The verb διαγογγύζω is used also in Lk. 19.7 with respect to criticism of Jesus' table fellowship with Zacchaeus (R.A. Culpepper, 'The Gospel of Luke', in *NIB*, IX, pp. 3-490 [128]).

37. It is perhaps worth noting here that I consider Jesus' followers to be reformed characters, despite the fact that, in the Synoptics, his critics label them 'sinners'.

38. See 'προσδέχομαι', II, 6, in LSJ, p. 1505.

39. There is a problem with v. 9, in that πρὸς αὐτόν must be interpreted as *to him*, i.e. to Zacchaeus, although Jesus' statement is addressed to the critical bystanders (Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, p. 33). The difficulty is not present in those texts which read πρὸς αὐτούς, and make sense of the fact that Jesus is speaking of Zacchaeus in the third person (Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, p. 34).

40. See Green, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 668.

41. D. Hamm, 'Zacchaeus Revisited Once More: A Story of Vindication or Conversion?' *Biblica* 72 (1991), pp. 249-52, following A.C. Mitchell, 'Zacchaeus Revisited: Luke 19,8 as a Defense', *Biblica* 71 (1990), pp. 153-76. Note that the verbs ὑποδέχομαι (v. 6) and καταλύω

Zacchaeus is particularly significant in that the strangers in these cases are envoys of God—the three angels, and Jesus, respectively.<sup>42</sup> Now, I referred earlier to the possibility that at least some aspects of the Zacchaeus story are fictitious, and I believe the toll collector's name may be a creation of the evangelist. It has the meaning *the righteous one*,<sup>43</sup> and we see now how appropriate that name is for the toll collector in view of his hospitality to Jesus.

When we apply this finding to Mk 2.14-17, it is apparent that Levi, like Zacchaeus, is accounted as righteous, and wins salvation by dint of his hospitality to Jesus. Furthermore, a possible reason emerges for differentiating between toll collectors and sinners: the former are characterized as hosts to Jesus, the latter as followers who share the benefits of Jesus' status as a guest, once he has been welcomed. The distinction is by no means absolute: as toll collectors, Levi and Zacchaeus would both be regarded by opposition parties as sinners. Moreover, it is not clear whether the other toll collectors at Levi's house are present as friends of the host, or as 'sinners' who accompany Jesus. Nevertheless, the concept does allow for the possibility of an actual demarcation between the toll collectors and sinners who feature in the Synoptics.

Although the tradition linking toll collectors with hospitality may derive from a single historical incident, it illuminates Jesus' attitude to wealth.<sup>44</sup> Even if Levi renounced his vocation to become a follower of Jesus, he appears not to have been required to give up his material goods. Hence, his situation differs from that of the would-be follower in Mk 10.17-22,<sup>45</sup> who is instructed by Jesus to sell his possessions and give to the poor if he wishes to gain eternal life. As well as indicating that Jesus did not require all of his followers to become itinerant, the comparison between the two men affirms the salvific value of Levi's hospitality to Jesus. It is interesting that in Lk. 3.11, John the Baptist also places significant emphasis on hospitality, advocating that anyone who has food must share it with those who have none.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the provision of hospitality, especially

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(v. 7) both affirm that Jesus receives complete Mediterranean hospitality (i.e. board and lodging) at Zacchaeus' house (Hamm, 'Zacchaeus Revisited', p. 250).

42. Further evidence of the high value attributed to hospitality in Judaeo-Christian tradition is that Rahab attains faith hero status on account of her welcome to the two Israelite spies. See Josh. 2; Jas 2.25; Heb. 11.31. Note that Rahab is the only woman named among the faith heroes in Heb. 11.

43. Or *the pure one*. See Walker, 'Jesus and the Tax Collectors', p. 234; W.L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), s.v. 'זָכוֹן': *qal*', p. 88.

44. Of the three accounts of the call of Levi/Matthew, Luke's version especially raises the question as to how he could have hosted a great feast if he indeed 'left everything' (Lk. 5.28).

45. And parallels Mt. 19.16-22; Lk. 18.18-23.

46. In addition, according to the following two verses, John did not call on toll collectors to leave their vocation when they came to him for baptism, but only to limit revenue-collection to the prescribed dues. See Green, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 246.

to Jesus, is indicative of repentance, as well as being a means of salvation. Conversely, as we see from the parable about the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16.19-31), *failure* to offer hospitality demonstrates an unwillingness to repent, and leads to damnation.<sup>47</sup>

### *The Call to Love of Enemies*

In Lk. 6.27-36, the term *sinners* (ἁμαρτωλοί) is not used in relation to the disciples, but here means *genuinely wicked people*.<sup>48</sup> These verses highlight the difference between the radical behaviour that Jesus urges, and the basic human responses that are practised even among sinful people. To appreciate the exceptional nature of Jesus' call, we need to compare it with the ethos of reciprocity that prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world. There are three recognized categories—generalized, balanced, and negative reciprocity<sup>49</sup>—but here, only the first is relevant. Generalized reciprocity refers to altruistic actions in which one party provides some service to another, without any *specific* expectation of return; however, the obligation to return the favour at a future time is always *implied*. Typical examples are guest-friendship, and the sorts of assistance provided within family groups or among friends.<sup>50</sup> In contrast to these conventions, Jesus proclaims that good deeds are to be done not for the sake of an anticipated reward, but solely on grounds of benevolence and compassion.<sup>51</sup>

Our primary focus is on the injunction 'love your enemies' (vv. 27 and 35). The implication of this teaching is that beneficence is to be shown *beyond* the bounds of families and friends, i.e. to 'outsiders'.<sup>52</sup> Hence it is a call to practise

47. Hamm, 'Zacchaeus Revisited', p. 251.

48. The term ἁμαρτωλοί found in Lk. 6.32-34 is not employed in Matthew's approximate parallel to this section (5.46-47). Instead, Matthew has οἱ τελῶναι (5.46), and οἱ ἔθνηκοί (5.47), and the International Q Project shows a preference for these terms over against Luke's 'sinners' (see J.M. Robinson, P. Hoffman and J.S. Kloppenborg [eds.], *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis including the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas* [Leuven: Peeters, 2000], pp. 68-71). However, this does not alter the fact that both gospels portray Jesus here as making a distinction between what was expected according to kingdom values, and the behaviour witnessed even among those characterized as 'unrighteous'.

49. J.H. Neyrey, 'Ceremonies in Luke-Acts: The Case of Meals and Table Fellowship', in J.H. Neyrey (ed.), *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 361-87 (372).

50. Neyrey, 'Ceremonies in Luke-Acts', p. 372. Note that Neyrey lists *hospitality* as exemplifying generalized reciprocity, but I have substituted *guest-friendship*, because the *ancient* sense of the word *hospitality* makes it unsuitable as an example.

51. See Green, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 269. The verb ἀπελπίζω in v. 35 has the sense of *despairing*, i.e. *of receiving anything*, owing to the contrast in v. 34 of εἰάν δανίσητε παρ' ὧν ἐλπίζετε λαβεῖν ('ἀπελπίζω', in BAGD, pp. 83-84 [84]).

52. Green, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 272. The parallel version in Mt. 5.43-48 portrays Jesus in v. 43 as partially citing Lev. 19.18 with regard to love of one's neighbour, but as adding a

hospitality (φιλοξενία) in its ancient sense: *love of strangers, foreigners, or enemies*.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the contradiction of reciprocity conventions that this entails is closely paralleled in Lk. 14.12-14, where Jesus advocates inviting people who cannot return the favour.<sup>54</sup> It is also reminiscent of Isa. 58.7, which commends the sharing of food with the hungry, and inviting the homeless poor under one's roof.

An important factor that can be discerned in Lk. 6.27-36 is that those listening evidently include some with goods that could be stolen, and with sufficient means to be able to give or lend<sup>55</sup>—indeed, people able to offer hospitality. This is redolent of our finding as to the salvific value of the toll collectors' hospitality. Levi and Zacchaeus may both be seen as having demonstrated their righteousness by emulating God's compassion for the poor. The potential hosts among the listeners are urged to do likewise.

### *Eligibility for the Kingdom*

When the Gospels are interpreted from the perspective of table fellowship, *salvation* can be understood as becoming eligible for entrée into the kingdom, and the eschatological banquet, by attaining a right relationship with God. Since the risen Jesus is perceived as chief guest at the heavenly banquet, this occasion is analogous to an *earthly* banquet at which his disciples are present as his

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reference to hating one's enemy, as if that too was a biblical command. It is not, even though passages such as Deut. 7.2 and Ps. 139.21-22 highlight the traditional demarcation between neighbours and enemies (A.J. Saldarini, 'Matthew', in J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson [eds.], *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], p. 1017). Moreover, the expression Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρήθη...ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν in Mt. 5.43-44 should not be interpreted as if the teaching contradicted the existing commandments, but rather as Matthew's desire to show how Jesus was clarifying and extending God's laws (Saldarini, 'Matthew', pp. 1015-16). (It is noteworthy that this expression, which occurs also in Mt. 5.21-22, 27-28, 33-34, 38-39, and with a variation in vv. 31-32, is not considered authentic [see Robinson, Hoffman and Kloppenborg (eds.), *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 56-71].) The contexts of both Mt. 5.43-48 and Lk. 6.27-36 reflect a concern for maintaining harmony in community relationships, as does Lev. 19, but the difference in Jesus' teaching lies in his emphasis on treating 'outsiders' as neighbours.

53. Admittedly, the verb used in Lk. 6.27, 35 is ἀγαπάω rather than φιλέω, and the object is ἐχθρούς, as against ξένους. However, the validity of this interpretation is supported by Paul's quotation (Rom. 12.20) of Prov. 25.21 (LXX 32.21), asserting that if an enemy (ἐχθρός) is hungry and thirsty, one should give the person food and drink. The following verse, Rom. 12.21, enjoins overcoming evil by doing good. Thus Rom. 12.20-21 forms a close parallel to Lk. 6.27, the focus in both texts being the love of enemies, and doing good to them.

54. The link between this passage and Lk. 6.32-35 is observed by I.H. Marshall, who seems to consider that the sentiments derive from Jesus (*The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster, 1978], p. 583).

55. Green, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 271.

*umbrae*, i.e. attending 'in his name'. In other words, Jesus' followers gain salvation by virtue of their solidarity with him.

As well as determining how the so-called 'sinners' attain salvation, we saw that the toll collectors are stereotyped as demonstrating their repentance and eligibility for the kingdom by their willingness to provide hospitality to Jesus and other outsiders. Although this finding relies to some extent on Luke's Gospel, it coheres well with the logion in Mt. 21.31b,<sup>56</sup> in which Jesus proclaims that the toll collectors, along with prostitutes, will enter the kingdom ahead of the chief priests and Pharisees.<sup>57</sup>

I need to mention briefly three texts which indicate the significance of humility: Mk 9.33-37; 10.14-15, 42-44. In the first two passages, I consider that the παῖδία are best seen as young slaves/servants, who owing to their very low status are typical ἄκλητοι. The two major points to emerge are that entry to the kingdom requires humility as of a παῖδιον;<sup>58</sup> and that to receive outsiders,

56. Although there is debate as to the authenticity of this saying, there are strong grounds for treating it as dominical. (1) It qualifies as authentic according to the *criterion of embarrassment*, i.e. the concept that sayings of Jesus that would have caused embarrassment to the early Christians would not have been created by the evangelists. See J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. I. *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1991), p. 168. (2) The content of Mt. 21.31b-32 bears a close relationship to that of Lk. 7.29-30, and a number of scholars consider that it derives from Q. E.g. see Corley, *Private Women*, p. 157; Corley, *Women and the Historical Jesus*, pp. 87-96 and notes, esp. 181-82 nn. 87-89; Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, pp. 96-97; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, II, p. 225 n. 232; Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, III, pp. 165-66 n. 6; and the list in J.S. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, and Concordance* (Foundations and Facets Reference Series; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1988), p. 58. For scholars *against* a derivation from Q see again lists in the latter two references. (3) While I acknowledge that the International Q Project expressed doubt about including any of the Matthaean pericope in Q (see Robinson, Hoffman and Kloppenborg [eds.], *Critical Edition of Q*, pp. 138-39), it is noteworthy that several scholars consider that Mt. 21.31b-32 has been drawn from some other pre-existing tradition (e.g. Schweizer, *According to Matthew*, p. 410; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, p. 422; and see esp. Meier, who believes the passage is likely to have an historical basis [*A Marginal Jew*, II, p. 169]). He suggests that underlying Mt. 21.31-32 and Lk. 7.29-30 were two traditions containing some ideas in common, and that both were redacted by the evangelists (*A Marginal Jew*, II, p. 225 n. 233). Moreover, according to Bultmann, the authenticity of v. 31b is not in doubt, and Matthew probably based v. 32 on the tradition expressed in Lk. 7.29-30 (*Synoptic Tradition*, p. 177).

57. There is continuing discussion as to the meaning of the verb in this context. Although v. 31b is usually understood to mean that the toll collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom first, before the religious leaders, some scholars interpret προάγουσιν here as indicating that the Pharisees and chief priests will be excluded. See e.g. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, p. 422; Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, III, pp. 169-70; and also Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, II, p. 224 n. 229.

58. Mk 9.35; 10.14-15, 42-44.

however low their status may be, is equivalent to welcoming Jesus, and indeed God.<sup>59</sup> As well as highlighting the importance of humility, these texts confirm the salvific value of hospitality.

A similar logion occurs in Matthew's account of the sending out of the Twelve (10.40). What is interesting here is that the parallel in Lk. 10.16 expresses the same concept in negative terms: '...whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me' (NRSV). This leads us to the topic of the next section, the dichotomy between reception and rejection.

### *Reception vs. Rejection*

A convenient starting point for discussion is J.D. Crossan's notion that relationships between the early itinerant Christians and their hosts involved a healing/eating 'dyad'.<sup>60</sup> According to this theory, the itinerant disciples entered into a reciprocal arrangement with the householders who welcomed them.<sup>61</sup> In other words, Crossan believes that in return for the healing offered by the disciples, the householders provided meals. I find this overall principle untenable on a number of grounds, most importantly because *true* hospitality is offered without the expectation of reward.<sup>62</sup> However, I completely agree with Crossan about one aspect, namely that 'receiving' the disciples implied an invitation to the householder's table, i.e. to a shared meal. Anything less than that, such as giving

59. Mk 9.36-37 and par. Lk. 9.47-48; and see partial parr. Mt. 18.2-5; Jn 13.20.

60. The dyad is also expressed by Crossan in terms of compassion/commensality, magic/meal, and 'spiritual and material egalitarianism'. See J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), esp. p. 345.

61. See Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, esp. pp. 304, 344-45.

62. Other perceived weaknesses in Crossan's approach are as follows: (1) The authenticity of *Gos. Thom.* 14.4, one of three 'key' texts, is debatable. Note that in Crossan's more recent works, the passages stated as 'key texts' differ slightly from those specified in his *Historical Jesus*, pp. 332-33. See his accounts in J.D. Crossan, 'Itinerants and Householders in the Earliest Jesus Movement', in W.E. Arnal and M. Desjardins (eds.), *Whose Historical Jesus?* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism, 7; Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1997), pp. 7-24 (10 n. 10); J.D. Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), pp. 327-30. (2) Crossan's construct of the kingdom as a phenomenon existing only in the present, and not as a future reality, fails to recognize the historical Jesus' role as an eschatological prophet. See Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. 304. (3) Crossan's concept overemphasizes the place of healing in the overall ministry of the disciples, and does not take account of the fact that healing was only available to householders *following* their reception of the itinerants. (4) In *Birth of Christianity*, pp. 331-32, Crossan posits an escalating rejection of the itinerants as the social programme spread from rural to urban areas. This theory reads far too much into the house vs. town ambiguity in Mk 6.10-11 and Lk. 10.6-15, and is unconvincing.

them alms, was tantamount to rejection.<sup>63</sup> This idea of a dichotomy between reception and rejection is entirely consistent with relevant New Testament texts such as Mt. 25.31-46, and ancient hospitality traditions—there was no middle path between hospitality and hostility.<sup>64</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Our findings can be summarized as follows: Eligibility for the kingdom is attainable by means of solidarity with Jesus, following repentance. Yet although this concept coheres with that of justification by faith, we have established that it is not the sole means of salvation. Those who offer hospitality to ἄκλητοι demonstrate their repentance, and eligibility for the kingdom, by their godly qualities of compassion and generosity. However, in addition, humility was shown to be an essential quality for entrée to the kingdom.

In modern society, we no longer believe in a God who would punish us eternally if we opt for almsgiving in lieu of offering hospitality to strangers and outsiders. However, it is salutary to consider the centrality of hospitality in Jesus' teaching, and to reflect on Abraham as a role model for all his spiritual descendants—Jews and Muslims, as well as Christians. Salvation is available not only to those who trust in Jesus, but to all who practise true hospitality. Moreover, owing to our common heritage through Abraham, the hospitality ethic is equally relevant to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, so there is potential here for rapprochement. Given the present global tensions between adherents of the great monotheistic faiths, this is an area that surely deserves urgent attention.

63. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, p. 341; Crossan, *Birth of Christianity*, pp. 330-31.

64. See M. Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Cohen & West, corrected edn, 1969), p. 79.

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