

JESUS AS SOCIAL PROPHET

A. Introduction

B. Patriarchal Society

1. What is a patriarchal society?

Androcentric

Patriarchal

2. Roman Domination of Jewish Palestine

a. Pompey (63 BC)

b. Antipater (55 BC)

c. Herod the Great (43 BC)

d. Pilate (24-36 AD)



3. Jesus and Patriarchal Power

a. Hierarchical power

Mark 10:41-44. 10:41 When the ten heard this [that James and John wanted to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus], the disciples began to be angry with James and John. 10:42 So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 10:43 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 10:44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all” (NRSV).

b. Hating father and mother

Luke 14:26. Jesus said, “If any one come to me without hating his father, mother wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his or her own life, cannot be my disciple” (NRSV).

c. Women blessed on what grounds?

Luke 11:27. “While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!’ But he said to her, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.’” (NRSV).

Luke 8:21. At one time in Jesus’ ministry, his mother and his brothers came to him, but they couldn’t reach him because the crowds surrounding him were so large. Someone told Jesus that his family was trying to reach him. In response, Jesus said, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

d. Call no one “Father”

Matt 23:9. “And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven” (NRSV).

e. Teaching Mary

Luke 10:38-42. 10:38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 10:39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying. 10:40 But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.” 10:41 But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; 10:42 there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.” (NRSV);

Acts 22:3. 22:3 “I am [Paul] a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today.

C. Peasant Society

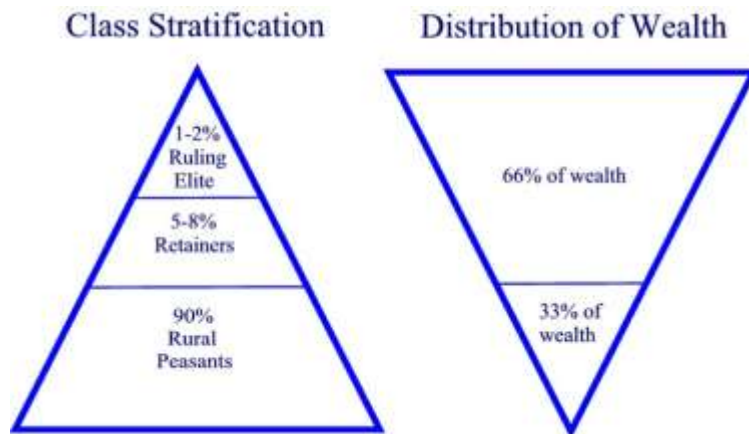
1. Ancient Jewish Palestine

a. Prosperity for the cities

b. Tithing and taxes

c. Redistribution of land

d. Class and Wealth



2. Resistance and Rebellion in Judea and Galilee ¹

a. Repeated revolts

- (1) Guerrilla attacks against Herod the Great (40-4 BCE)
- (2) Judas son of Hezekiah (4 BCE)
- (3) Jewish War (66- 73AD)
- (4) Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 AD)

b. Protest, Resistance, and Terrorism

- (1) Qumran
- (2) “The Fourth Philosophy”
- (3) Sicarii
- (4) Popular Protests
- (5) Popular Prophetic and Messianic Movements

3. Jesus and Peasant Society

a. You cannot serve God and wealth

Matt 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (NRSV).

b. They devour widows’ houses

Mark 12:38-40. 12:38 As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 12:39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 12:40 They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.” (NRSV)

c. Jubilee and debt release

Luke 4:18-19. 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 4:19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (NRSV)

¹ Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and empire. The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003)35-54.

D. Purity System

1. What is purity?

2. How do people become impure or defiled?

3. The purity codes

4. The Temple: The Center of Power and Purity

5. Jesus on Purity: Two Views

a. Jesus Opposed Purity Laws²

(1) Rooted in *holiness* and in Lev 19:2

(2) Rooted in *compassion* and Exod 34:6

b. Jesus Embraced the Purity Laws³

(1) The first type of impurity has no moral content or implication,

(2) The second type of impurity was “moral”

c. Jesus and Purity: The Evidence

(1) **Mark 1:40-42.** 1:40 A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." 1:41 Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" 1:42 Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. (NRSV)

(2) **Mark 7:1-5, 18-23.** 7:1 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 7:2 they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 7:3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus

² Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus & the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994) 50-61; idem, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus*. With a forward by N.T. Wright (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1998).

³ Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth: King of the Jews. A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity*. New York: Vintage, 1999) 197-214. idem, “Go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded” (Mk 1:44): *Jesus, Purity, and the Christian Study of Judaism*. <http://bu.edu/religion/faculty/fredriksen/purity.html>.

observing the tradition of the elders; 7:4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 7:5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" (NRSV)

7:18 He said to them [the disciples], "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 7:19 since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 7:20 And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles. 7:21 For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 7:22 adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (NRSV)

(3) Mark 8:22-26. 8:22 They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. 8:23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" 8:24 And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." 8:25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 8:26 Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village." (NRSV)

(4) Luke 7:11-20. 7:11 Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. 7:12 As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. 7:13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." 7:14 Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" 7:15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. (NRSV)

(5) Luke 5:29-30. 5:29 Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. 5:30 The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" (NRSV)

(6) Matt 5:23-24. 5:23 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 5:24 leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. (NRSV)