

**SOCIAL INSTITUTION AND RELATIONSHIP IN LUKE  
22:14-30: A SOCIAL INTERTEXTURE READING OF  
REMEMBRANCE MEALS AND EFFECTS ON HUMAN  
DIGNITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

The remembrance meal in Luke invites the reader to see how the Lukan Jesus effectively implements the new era of humanity through a meal scene rich in both social institutions and social relationships. Using intertexture as one of the subsets of socio-rhetorical hermeneutics, this article reveals that Luke situates his remembrance meal narrative to teach his community how to remember the Lukan Jesus and his sacrifice on behalf of humanity. The intertexture reading further reveals that this meal scene can activate different human institutions that aid in creating social relationships within human society. The article concludes that Lukan Jesus uses the remembrance meal scene to teach his newly inaugurated community how to remember him as they interact through different social institutions and relationships. Therefore, remembering Jesus in this context means the church and Christian community embarking on actions that will help shape, transform, and restore humanity's dignity.

**KEYWORDS:** Remembrance meals, Social institution, Social relationships, Intertexture, and Socio-rhetoric.

**INTRODUCTION**

Intertexture (Robbins, 1996a:4) refers to the relationship between the text and its interaction with the outside world. The intertexture of a text is evident in many tapestries, which include oral-scribal intertexture, social intertexture, cultural intertexture, and historical intertexture. The depiction of how the outside world

influences the understanding of scripture becomes crucial in applying intertextuality (Frye, 2023:9-10). Social intertexture indicates the occurrences of words or ideas in the text that question the issue of social meaning that the interpreter explores with data outside the text (Gowler, 2003:105-106). Socio-rhetorical hermeneutics is the opinion that social knowledge is expressed in the interaction between people in society. This contrasts with cultural understanding, which must be taught and is less accessible than social knowledge. People in each society acquire their social knowledge based on their interaction with others (Robbins, 1996a:62). Jesus' interaction with people in his society reveals that he did not interact with them in isolation. He followed the usual pattern of interactions that were expected at that time. This helped create and shape people's opinions about him. Luke emphasises how the people of his time interacted with one another in his society. For instance, Gowler (2003:120) mentions that patronage and benefaction were the standard interactive methods used during Luke's time. Jonathan Marshall (2009:21) adds that "Jesus' instruction in the Last Supper is a natural candidate for the discussion of benefactors and patrons since Luke refers to *εὐεργέτης* (22:14-30)." The Roman Empire would not have functioned at all without a social interactive apparatus being put in place in its society. Making use of some of the terms such as *βασιλεία* "kingdom" and *εὐεργέτης* "benefaction" that were familiar to his audience, Luke appeals to his community during his orderly account of Jesus in his Gospel to imitate and follow Jesus' example.

Social intertexture involves social institutions, relationships, roles, and identity. Given the nature of the text under consideration, the social intertexture will be confined to social institutions and social relationships. This article will examine the social interactions evident in the society when Luke wrote his narrative of Jesus. The Lukan narrative presents a social intertexture that manifests in the text as social institutions and social relationships. Specifically, we will examine the kingdom as a social institution, focusing on patronage and benefactor roles as depicted in social relationships in Luke 22:14-30. This article argues that remembering Jesus through the Lord's Supper or the remembrance meal entails positively engaging all social institutions and relationships to foster cohesion in human society. Jesus is remembered when all the elements of social institutions and relationships, from the viewpoint of socio-rhetorical interpretation, are utilised to benefit common humanity.

### **KINGDOM AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION IN LUKE 22:14-30**

The text falls within the context of Jesus' remembrance meal with his disciples before he faced crucifixion. An analysis of Luke 22:14-30 shows that the

text somewhat discloses the nature of some of the social institutions that existed when Luke wrote to his audience. Sociologically, social institutions are organised spheres of social life or societal subsystems designed to meet human needs. John Elliot (1991:212-213) alleges that the Lukan material contains a more elaborate treatment of institutions than any other writing in the New Testament. By implication, it means that Luke was interested in the entire community and wanted to address them by writing that only Jesus could provide for a good kingdom. Luke portrayed Jesus' preaching as contrasting with the already existing system that dehumanised humanity. Jesus' preaching centred on the kingdom of God. This kingdom differed from the kingdom of the Gentiles (22:18, 26). Jesus contrasted the kingdom of the Gentiles with that of God, as well as with the temple and other religious institutions available at that time (Elliott, 1991:213-217).

### **The Kingdom of God**

The concept of the kingdom of God has received extensive treatment in biblical studies, especially in the Gospels. The phrase ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ “the kingdom of God,” according to George Eldon Ladd (1994:60-61), comes from the Old Testament (Isa 40:9; Mic 4:7) and refers to the rule of God over what he has created. Later, in Judaism, it was believed that the kingdom of God refers to God's rule or sovereignty. This could have been the concept that was in the mind of Jesus when He spoke of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (the kingdom of God). In Jesus, the dynamic of the kingdom is established, which contrasts with that of the kingdoms of the world (either the vassal or suzerainty kingdom) and especially that of the Roman Empire. Jesus' idea of the kingdom of God was politically subversive to the kingdoms of the Greco-Roman world, and it was inaugurated as Jesus preached, healed the sick, and cared for the poor and the hungry (Funk, 2002:19-26). The dynamic of the kingdom of God involved a change of attitude from that of the empire to that of the new community established by Jesus (Etukumana, 2024:7-8). Mortimer Arias (1984:13-26) has argued that the nature of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ “the kingdom of God” in Luke differs from other kingdoms. In this regard, Jesus demonstrates one aspect by “opening his table” for all to come and eat. The radical hospitality of Jesus to all was synonymous with the launching of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, which he implored his disciples to remember him for (Wright, 1996:228).<sup>1</sup> Mary Beavis (2004:104) adds that the kingdom Jesus preached was in contrast to that of the Jews, as it acknowledged the universality of God's rule in the hearts of men. J.C. O'Neil (1993:140) understands ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as something that “an individual can grasp”, in other words, a physical kingdom rather than a purely spiritual realm. He,

however, adds that the kingdom of God requires individual preparation for one to qualify to enter.

The contention among some scholars (e.g. Weiss, 1971:74; Fitzmyer, 1985:1397) concerning the meaning of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ “the kingdom of God” as the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus seems to point to the possibility that Jesus’ use of the phrase in Luke portrays the ruling of God in the heart of men. The possibility of changing their behaviour was expected of those who claimed to receive the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God can be equated with the wind, which human eyes cannot see, but whose manifestations can be seen and experienced by believers. Luke reiterates this by using the meal context to inform his audience that ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ “the kingdom of God” only manifested through the process of remembering Jesus by imitating the way he had behaved: his leadership style, caring for the outcast, and accepting all as they were. It, therefore, implies that the Lukan community was the earthly agent that facilitated the expansion of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ by remembering and imitating its inaugurator, Jesus, who used a radical inclusive approach in dealing with his community (Tannehill, 1992:20). The kingdom, as inaugurated by Jesus, can be expanded through the caring and loving for one another, which aims to restore the dignity of humanity.

### **The Kingdom of the Gentiles**

The kingdom of the Gentiles is designated as καιροὶ ἐθνῶν “times of the Gentiles” in Luke 21:24. The empire during the period of Luke is an example of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν ἐθνῶν “the kingdom of the Gentiles” (22:25). This kingdom was ruled by the emperor and his consuls, who exercised authority over their subjects and society. Josephus (in Buchanan, 1984:16) says that the term βασιλεία refers to the authority of the kings, those aspiring to be kings, and those who received the honour of the kings. He adds that there are about forty-seven instances where βασιλεία refers to “a territory ruled by a king” which includes everything about the king – the crown, honour, robe and the power of the king to exercise authority over his subjects (Buchanan, 1984:17). It was a system that Horsley (2005:54) describes as “complex and pervasive in its operations and effect”. Through this system of leadership, “the Roman emperor wielded his power and authority over the cities in the East through governors and other political and military representatives” (Moxnes, 1994:382), and by delegating power to elites, he was able to control the system. These rulers used different forms of power plays to oppress the non-elites (the majority in the society).

The Mediterranean culture of honour and shame contributed to the rich becoming richer while the poor remained in poverty. The elites controlled the non-elites using the patronage and benefaction systems that were common in the Greco-

Roman world. Luke informed his audience that the kingdom of the Greco-Roman world contrasted with that of Jesus' community. Whereas the kingdoms of the Gentiles exploited the poor, the kingdom of Jesus gave all to the poor and the needy without looking for a reward or what Moxnes (1994:386) calls "reciprocity."

## **SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP IN LUKE 22:14-30**

Sociologically, the interaction of people with one another in any given society communicates the social interaction of that society from one generation to another. In Mediterranean culture, relationships were defined based on the interaction that would bring interest to the parties involved in such a relationship (Robbins, 1996 b: 162- 163). The basis of such a relationship was rooted within the system of patronage and benefaction, which involved reciprocity.

### **Patronage System and Lukan Remembrance**

It is often asked whether Luke's Gospel reflects the patronage system that was practised during his time. Marshall (2009:322-323) exemplifies this perspective, understanding Jesus as someone with no connection to the Greco-Roman world, viewing him as just an ordinary Jewish peasant. If Marshall is correct, it means that Jesus neither accepted nor criticised the dynamics of patronage. Patronage was one of the ways an action of a patron would be remembered in the Greco-Roman world, and it was this patronage system that warranted Luke writing to his community so that they would continue to recognise Jesus as their patron. The patronage system is thus an integral part of Luke's Gospel.

The patronage system in the Greco-Roman world established a relationship between a patron and a client (Megbelayin, 2001:192); as such, it was a system of utmost importance within the context of the empire. It focused on past practices to build a future relationship. These relationships were legally created through the process of *patrocinium* (Ascough, 2010:600).<sup>2</sup> It was a mechanism used by the lords of the empire to wield power over their subjects. It produced a contract that led one to depend upon another, while the patron decided on how to reward his beneficiaries or clients. The system was formalised at its highest level in the imperial cult.

Luke mentions those who exercised authority over their subjects and that they were called benefactors (εὐεργέται) in Luke 22:25. The mention of εὐεργέτης by Jesus in the text indicates a negative example of leadership and authority (Marshall, 2009:286). It was common for Roman rulers to lord over the people of the Roman Empire, as expressed in the Lukan text.<sup>3</sup> It was possible for a benefactor to use their patronage (benevolence) to exploit their clients (Marshall, 2009:45). Malina

(in Megbelayin, 2001:193) acknowledges this and points out that this system existed between people of unequal status and thus provided a system in which the inferior person continued in their social standing. The system did not leave the lesser partner with a choice of how the relationship should be conducted. The exploitation of the lesser partner in this relationship seemed to be the aim of patron-client contracts (Marshall, 2009:46-47).

The patrons (*patronus*)<sup>4</sup> in their patronage provided their clients with access to goods, entertainment, and advancement. Anyone who received such benevolence accepted the obligation to make known to the public their gratitude towards his or her benefactor, thereby promoting and enhancing the reputation of the patron. In this way, the client helped to strengthen the reputation of their patron. The client also owed services to the patron and could be called upon to perform specific tasks; this may have been the reason that clownism and sycophantism permeated the ancient world, thus further contributing to the patron's power. Another figure that played an important role "in this network of patronage" is what Jeremy Boissevain (in deSilva, 1996:93)<sup>5</sup> calls a "broker". He points out that the "Persons who dispense first-order resources [e.g., land, jobs, and the like] may be called patrons while those who dispense second-order resources [i.e., strategic contacts or access to patrons] are brokers". As a result, deSilva (1996:93) states:

The term may seem modern, impersonal, and therefore inappropriate, but one must imagine the same personal relationship and duty between broker and client as between patron and client. Indeed, the "broker" is not a third entity *sui generis*, but rather a "client [or friend] to a patron and ... patron to a client."

The long-standing practice of the brokerage system is believed to be as ancient as the term "patronage." Both terms are directly or indirectly dependent upon each other. The broker was a person who controlled and manipulated power in ancient society, and such individuals were strongly connected with the political figures of their time (deSilva, 1996:93-4). The relationship between the emperor and the members of his consulars could be regarded as that of a broker and patron. The duty of a broker was to promote the affairs of their patron with an expectation of material benefits in return. There are many instances where the broker-patron relationship was witnessed in the Greco-Roman world (deSilva, 1996:93-94). Marshall (2009:46) further indicates that there are many examples where clients erected structures to honour their patrons.

Caesar Augustus is regarded as one of the well-known patrons in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Augustus, in his *Res Gestae Divi Augustus*, lists many honours that were given to him because of his patronage to the people. According to

Megbelayin (2001:194-195), Augustus mentioned about twenty-three titles and honours that were given to him by his people; and above all, Augustus was regarded as a god even when he was still alive.<sup>6</sup>

Alicia Batten (2008:50) believes that many patrons in the Roman Empire expected their clients to give them honour and respect in return for their service to them. Patronage was highly sophisticated, marshalled to make a profit for the patron. The alliance between a patron and a client can be confusing. The reason for this is that there was a notable display of hypocrisy in the ancient world. While patrons can refer to their clients as friends, the true nature of their relationship, as one between an inferior and a superior, was only made apparent when there was a need for the display of power. This is demonstrated in the work of *Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis*, known in English as *Juvenal* (A.D. 55-120).<sup>7</sup> In Juvenal's fifth satire, he aims to demonstrate patron-client friendship in a satirical way. Mark Morford (1977:236) remarks that he shows that two friends were in a client-patron relationship that reveals "the contrast between patron and client is heightened beyond mere description by literary and rhetorical devices, in particular allusion and associative imagery." This depicts that the patrons were using their clients to achieve their selfish desire. In other words, the interests of the clients were not a priority for the patron.

Assessing this satire in the light of the patronage system in the Greco-Roman world, Batten (2008:50) further elucidates it by adding that Juvenal describes a relationship between Virro (a wealthy man) and Trebius (a poor fellow). At the end of his satire, Trebius was humiliated by Virro, the rich man, as was common in patron-client relationships.

Another feature of patron-client relationships in the Greco-Roman world is the principle of reciprocity, which Malina (1986:101) defines as "the action and reaction of two sides or two distinct social interests." Malina concludes that "the meaning embodied and realised in the vice versa reciprocity derives from the purpose of the interaction shared by one or both sides." The nature of the reciprocity witnessed in the relationship between a patron and client was that which Malina (1986:101) calls the "pure self-interest" of the patron, which is always to the disadvantage of the weaker party. The patron employed this sophisticated weapon of exploitation to wield power over their client; in other words, the patron in this society was characterised by a strong desire to achieve their own aims, rather than those of their client. The reputation of a patron was proportional to the number of their clients. The authority to decide was in the hands of the patron, who was able to reflect a social relationship by exercising his power over the people.

Saller (1982:205) notes that exchange between patron and client was considered crucial in fostering their relationship, particularly in matters of politics, law, and economics. This was a direct depiction of the situation that “if a man’s clientele was indicative of his current status, his potential for mobility depended on the effectiveness of patrons, whose wealth and political connections could be indispensable.”

Whenever it came to the issue of patronage in the Roman world, the emperor was regarded as the number one figure; in other words, he was *nec peribus impar* and *primus inter pares* in the society. Of course, he was the *Pater Patriae*<sup>8</sup> to the empire. This gave him the power to dispense his *gratia* of imperial beneficia to whoever he deemed fit. Thus, it demanded uncompromising devotion from all the public members within the *principate*. On the other hand, the emperor, *Pater Patriae* (father of his country), fulfilled his obligations to his people. One of the emperor’s duties was to satisfy the interests of the empire in different ways. The web of patron-client relationships emanating from the emperor designated him as the most crucial figure in society. The way the emperor dispensed his power made him dear to his people. One of the powers bestowed upon the emperor was the ability to appoint any officer in any vacant position without questioning from the *principate*. The *beneficio imperatoris* decided the emperor was bound to all within the *principate* or the empire. His duty was to fulfil his services to the empire. This demanded that every empire member ensure they had uncompromisingly fulfilled their obligation to the empire. According to Cicero (ca. 44 A.D.), every patron was expected to provide services to their client. Cicero, therefore, advised people to ensure that the exchange of their duty was commensurate with their obligation (Saller, 1982:61).<sup>9</sup>

Chow (1992:30-32) delineates some points that characterised the Greco-Roman patronage system. According to him, such relationships were asymmetrical, reciprocal, particularistic, supra-legal, voluntary, and vertical. These adjectives were also used to describe the relationship between patrons and clients. Politically, the client had the power to dispense honour to their patron as a sign of gratitude to the patron(s).

As a result, many scholars of the New Testament believe that Luke employed the language of the patron-client relationship to address his community, instilling in them an understanding of who Jesus was within the new community (Danker, 1982:324). According to deSilva (2000:121-126), Luke portrays Jesus as the patron of the new community in his work. He believes that Luke’s language is a clear indication of the reason why he uses the contemporary language of his time. Seeing it from the perspective of deSilva, it therefore means that God is the patron with the sole authority akin to the emperors to dispense grace and favour to whosoever he

wills; At the same time, Jesus, on the other hand, acts as a broker between God and humanity (deSilva, 2000:126-140). The duty of the Christian community was to respond to God's stimulus of benevolence through Christ Jesus by remembering his acts of service to humanity. "Do this in remembrance of Me" in the Lukan text does not mean that Jesus expected grace from the disciples, but their participation in his work for humanity. It was an obligation involving identity and communion (Punt, 2011:152) within the new community.

The depiction of God as patron, and Jesus as broker to humanity, has been the standard interpretation (Danker, 1982:324; Malina, 1988:2-32; Megbelayin, 2001) of the New Testament relationship, especially in the Lukan writings in the light of patron-client relations in the Greco-Roman world before the writing of Marshall and Batten.<sup>10</sup> The duo believe that Luke does not portray Jesus as a *patronus* but as εὐεργέτης. Using Marshall's and Batten's arguments as a point of departure, it is possible to examine the Lukan remembrance meal considering the practice of benefaction.

### **Benefaction and Lukan Remembrance**

Batten (2008:51) says that in his Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle provides humanity with an explanation regarding the two forms of benefaction practised in the Greco-Roman world. Firstly, he describes an individual who extended benefits for their community without expecting any reward from the beneficiary, and the second one is an individual who gave benefits to friends with the same social standing as themselves. The last act denotes the process of exchanging goods and services at the level of social equilibrium with each other. These two forms of benefaction mentioned by Aristotle clarify that benefaction did not occur with an expectation of reward by the recipient to his benefactor. Regarding this, Batten (2008:5) argues that a "true benefactor is the one who is not motivated by desires for repayment, but because of the service to humanity. Seneca (*Ben.* 3.15) states, "To help, to be of service, is the part of a generous and noble mind; he who gives acts like a god, he who demands repayment acts like a money-lender." Seneca further adds that true benefaction produces a bond between people.<sup>11</sup> Greek philosophers' writings depict the demarcation between the concept of benefaction in Greek and patronage in the Roman Empire. The Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Seneca, and the rest, believed that benefactions (εὐεργεσίας) should receive no reward in return, contrary to the Roman concept of *patronus* and *patrocinium*, which was expressly given with a high expectation of rewards from the clients.<sup>12</sup>

The common motive of a benefactor was to assist people experiencing poverty in their community. The healing and the feeding of the poor in the Gospel of

Luke point to Jesus as the one who was able to dispense true benefaction to the needy (Green, 1997:365). This is probably the reason Luke used benefaction to express the idea of patronage, as the way the Romans practised patronage was not in line with Jesus' ethos. If this is the case, it means that Luke refers to both patrons and benefactors with the same term.

Benefaction<sup>13</sup> was highly respected and valued by the Greeks. Benefaction, perhaps, entailed a purely philanthropic tendency. At the same time, patronage could have been practised to promote the interest of the patron (Batten, 2008:53). It seems that those who practised true benefaction were highly honoured and elevated in society due to their benefactions to humanity. Shelly Matthews (1999:199) mentions cases in which some key women of Gentile origin were honoured by the Hellenist Jews due to their benefaction to them.<sup>14</sup> The difference that existed between the two terms seems to be just a matter of style, as the two terms could be used interchangeably. It has been argued earlier that while patrons had real power over their subjects, benefactors did not. This, however, does not imply that benefaction did not place an obligation on those who benefited from it. While Marshall (2009:313) argues that only patrons required honour, and not benefactors, both expected their clients to respect and honour them for their actions. It is thus not possible to draw a watertight distinction between benefaction and patronage. Even if it were possible, it is also not clear if Luke's usage of εὐεργέτης depicts Roman patronage or Greek benefaction. What is clear is that Jesus warns his disciples against seeking honour and power for themselves to rule over others.

S. Joubert (2000:24) is thus probably correct when he observes that patronage and benefaction juxtapose each other in the Roman Empire, and in its philosophy, which had permeated the whole empire. No matter the level of differences that were in existence, whether consciously or unconsciously, between the two terms in question, one fact emerges from the use of these terms in the Greco-Roman world, namely, the heart of gratitude (Seneca, *Ben.* 3.11). The memory of such people who exercised acts of benefaction and patronage was engraved in stones, and above all, in the memory of the people who benefited in one way or another from such acts, as is clearly described by deSilva (1996:104):

Gratitude, as Seneca describes, involves an intense loyalty to the person from whom one has received beneficence, such that one would place a greater value on service to the benefactor than on one's place in one's homeland, one's physical well-being, one's wealth, and one's reputation. The bond between client and patron, or, one should add, between friends who share mutual beneficence, is thus truly the strongest bond in Greco-Roman society. Where the sanctity of gratitude is maintained ...

Seneca had earlier explained the actual condition of a benefaction. One who wants to be a benefactor must not have a desire for repayment or reward. That means that such a person must not be motivated by yearnings for recompense. What characterised such people was a lack of self-interest in the act of benefaction. The type of relationship that exists between parents and their children is akin to that of the benefactor and his beneficiaries. Whether there is any gratitude or ingratitude for the act of benefaction, the parents are of no interest to them. They must make sure that they do their part in making the children become good people in society (Seneca, *Ben.* 1.4.3). Batten (2008:52) points out (in connection with benefaction) that it contrasted with tyrannical systems that exerted and wielded power with the sole aim of selfishness. Benefactors in the Greco-Roman world were given the title of “father” and “saviour” of the people.

Marianne Palmer Bonz’s (1993:152) studies of benefaction in the earlier Greco-Roman empire show that many people-built temples for their gods, whose names were later remembered. However, despite this, many people, especially among the Jewish diaspora, believed that the only true benefactor was God, in sharp contrast to Greek and Roman thought. The Jews believed that “the emperor was not nearly so dependable a benefactor as was God”.

Jesus’ attitude towards people during his life on earth demonstrated to all people the power of the divine, which is more caring than that of the emperors and patrons of his time. The role of God as patron-benefactor, and Jesus as a broker, is undisputedly displayed in Jesus’ behaviour to the new community. For instance, the meal that Jesus gave to his disciples was to display his benefaction to them. During the meal, instead of the disciples serving, Jesus took the place of a servant by serving them at the table without demanding any reward from them. Luke also mentions that Jesus’ death was meant for the salvation of the whole community. By emphasising τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν “this is my body given for you,” Luke reiterates to the community the beneficial blood of Jesus with salvific effects to them – forgiveness and amnesty to the new community. The only reciprocity required was through the act of remembrance (Marshall, 2009:320-322).

Luke employs the Greco-Roman benefaction system as both a social context and a hermeneutical key for understanding the role played by the divine person and Jesus in the new community. Sometimes in the Greco-Roman world, benefaction involved a return; however, benefaction, as found in Luke 22:25, was not to be undertaken for a return. Part of the exceeding grace of God’s benefaction, then, is that God in Jesus is truly capable of giving without expectation of anything in return. Another aspect of the graciousness of God as benefactor and patron is that his grace extends not only to those established as gracious and as worthy of patronage, but to

the ungrateful sinners and the poor of the time. Luke's use of the phrase "this is my body that is given to you" is an example that shows that God has, in Jesus, dispensed God's gift of grace to humanity. It aligns with Luke's understanding of the ethics of the new community forms established by Jesus, informing the reader's conception of God and His grace throughout Jesus' life (Bonz, 1993:53).

Robert F. Stoops (1991:144-145) argues that the Christian community regarded Jesus as a patron and benefactor due to his care for the sick, the poor, women, and the outcast without looking forward to receiving any reward in return. That is the reason the word "servant" of the Lord was frequently used by the apostle and the later disciples of Jesus as a symbol of their alignment with the patronage and benefaction of Jesus. As a result, he further reiterates that:

... Believers are usually referred to as "servants" of Christ, a designation which emphasises their dependence and loyalty. Minister translates both *diakonos* and *doulos*. Christ stands at the head of a patronage *and benefaction* network offering benefits which are ultimately more real than those offered by competing cults or the secular society. Even the network anchored on the emperor is shown to be inferior (Stoops, 1991:146; italics ours).

## CONCLUSION

The social intertexture of Luke 22:14-30 reveals that Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God was in sharp contrast to that of the Greco-Roman kingdom ruled by the emperor. The kingdom of God was already manifested in Jesus' preaching and his miracles during his earthly ministry. This kingdom is believed to have started in the hearts of many who heard him preach and accepted his way of life through repentance. Those who heard him and accepted his principles were already into it, and therefore, they were expected to imitate the way Jesus lived his life. The kingdom of God has become a social institution for the Lukan community as a means through which Jesus exercised his benevolence towards his people, a social relationship that contrasts with the Roman social order, where the poor remain impoverished while the rich continue to be affluent.

The social intertexture further reveals that the system of patronage and benefaction practised by Jesus identified him as an example par excellence of one who cared for the poor and healed the sick without expecting any reciprocity; this attitude enabled him to challenge the conventional patrons of his time. This attitude of Jesus towards the inclusive community called for Luke to inform his community to remember Jesus and imitate his lifestyle.

This intertexture also points out that the concept of Jesus as Broker provides a hermeneutical key for understanding the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus is, from the start, a seemingly marginal figure in Jewish society. His foremost claim was that he had unlimited access to God, which granted him power as a broker between those on the margins and God. This mediational position in the honour and shame society made the Jewish elites query the authenticity and position of Jesus. They regarded him as one who circumvented the rule of law in the Jewish religion (Moxnes, 1991:259). Perhaps their honour was on the verge of collapse due to Jesus' influence in their society. Apart from this, their monopoly on divine patronage and Jesus' brokerage was more drastic and radical, as he regularly offered benefaction to those the Jewish leaders withheld it from: the poor, the impure, the ungrateful, and those unable to respond appropriately to acts of grace. To God's bestowed grace, people responded with praise/honour/veneration. Luke spoke into a situation where many of his Jewish readers would have understood God as Benefactor (Moxnes, 1991:257-258).

Luke's gospel portrays Jesus as the one who inverted and subverted typical patron-client relationships. Unlike the negative picture of "the rich" in Luke's Gospel, God's grace is regularly extended to those without honour, to the poor, to the impure, and to those unable to respond appropriately to grace, to women and the margins of society. Jesus is shown here as the faithful and beneficent Patron, worthy of undivided loyalty. As such, the model of patronage in the Lukan narrative advances Luke's portrayal of Christological-sociological events of Jesus' life and death, which is to be remembered by the new community. The church and the Christian communities must remember Jesus in all their undertakings for both the spiritual and the physical benefits of the human community.

## ENDNOTES

1. Several miracles that Jesus performed during his ministry were regarded as the expression of the kingdom of God. N.T. Wright (1996:147-197, 228) points out that the demonstration of the prophetic ministry of Jesus was synonymous with the launching of the kingdom and that the fulfilment of it will be at the *parousia* when Israel will be restored as the people of God alongside their Gentile counterparts.

2. Richard Ascough is the reviewer of Jonathan Marshall's book: *Jesus, patrons, and benefactors: Roman Palestine and the Gospel of Luke*. Marshall's opinion, according to Ascough, is that Luke did have a connection with the Greco-Roman society, but there is no evidence in the Lukan narrative that shows that Jesus ever criticised the Greco-Roman system. This opinion contrasts with the opinions that have been put forward by Malina (1988:2-32) and Megbelayin (2001:192).

3. Caesar Augustus is said to have rejected the dictatorial office that was given to him by the order of the senate. This clearly depicts the fact that the Roman emperors were dictators, as pointed out by Luke (for more details on this, see *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 20:4; Luke 22:25). The title εὐεργέτης sounds satirical in the Lukan narrative. Therefore, it seemed to have been despised by Jesus' community and probably regarded as inhuman.

4. The term here is without gender bias. It represents both genders – female and male – without emphasising one above the other. The same applies to the related terms such as broker, benefactor, and client, etcetera. The reason for this is that the system was widely practiced and accepted by the society at the time in question (Levick, 1985:141; Malina & Rohrbaugh, 1992:74-75; Boissevain, 1974:148; Danker, 1982:436; Davis, 1977:146).

5. Clownism stems from the word clown, which Eugene L. Stockwell, in his preface to the work of Hugh Lewin (1987: ix) writes that, “clown is both comedian and critic. The clown's role is to provide comic relief and critical commentary. What begins as laughter at the clown's antics often leads to laughter at the human condition itself, with all its absurdity. Still more, a good clown helps us laugh at ourselves”. This could probably be the same condition that deSilva (1996:63) depicts in his work. It was one of how the poor could approach the rich in the Greco-Roman world.

6. Among these titles and honours are: Liberator of people, Benefactor of veterans, Benefactor of the people, Benefactor of the state, Benefactor of the needy, Man of piety, Restorer of the temple and public work, Sponsor of games and shows, Peace extended, Coloniser, Redeemer of the standards, Friend of kings, Man of superb distinction, Father of his country and many others. Thus, the number of these honours demands that Caesar Augustus be regarded and equated as a patron of the Empire (Brunt and Moore, 1967:18-37).

7. The exact date of birth of *Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis* (Juvenal) is a matter of debate among scholars. But the popular opinion is that the poet was born in about A.D. 55. His work is reckoned as one of the best in illustrating and illuminating to modern scholarship the type of hypocrisy that existed between client-patron friendships in the Greco-Roman world. For more information on this, see Batten (2008:50); Morford (1977:228).

8. Caesar Augustus said that he was privileged to be given this great honour by the senate, equestrian order and the entire people of Rome; the same is confirmed by Cassius Dio in his writing when he said concerning this that, “... in addition to these remarkable privileges they named him father of his country, stamped this title on the coinage, voted to celebrate his birthday by public sacrifice, ordered that he should

have a statue in the cities and all the temples of Rome, and they set up two also on the ..., one representing him as the saviour of the citizens and the other as the deliverer of the city from siege, and wearing the crowns customary for such achievements" (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 35.1; Dio 44.4.4). This, however, was one of the highest honours an emperor could receive in the *principate*. Horace was believed to pray that Caesar might defer his death for him to be honoured by the people of Rome with the title "father and chief citizen" (*pater etqute princeps*) (Brunt and Moore, 1967:80).

9. "But in the performance of all these duties, we shall have to consider what is most needful in each case and what each person can or cannot procure without our help. In this way we shall find that the claims of social relationship, in its various degrees, are not identical with the dictates of circumstances; for there are obligations that are due to one individual rather than to another: for example, one would sooner assist a neighbour in gathering his harvest than either a brother or a friend; but should it be a case in court, one would defend a kinsman and a friend rather than a neighbour. Such questions as these must, therefore, be taken into consideration in every act of moral duty [and we must acquire the habit and keep it up], to become good calculators of duty, able by adding and subtracting to strike a balance correctly and find out just how much is due to each individual" (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.59 translated by Walter Miller) [http://www.constitution.org/rom/de\\_officiis.htm](http://www.constitution.org/rom/de_officiis.htm)). See also (Saller, 1982:16).

10. Marshall believes that Luke does not in any instance use the language that portrays either God or Jesus as patron, and that the evidence from the linguistic points of view reveals that Luke is ambivalent about the system. While Batten (2008:52-53) believes that the New Testament language depicts God not as a patron but a benefactor who gives everything to man without expecting any reward in return.

11. Seneca believes that benefit is what people should perform for others without looking for any reward from them. This act of giving without expecting any reward in return makes people attach to one another in harmony in any given society; in other words, it helps in maintaining a societal cohesion between different people (Seneca, *Ben.* 4. 41).

12. For further information as regards to this, see Marshall (2009:322-330).

13. Seneca (*Ben.* 1.33) believes that every gift of benefaction is retained and highly treasured in memory; by implication, "the memory of benefits does not grow old."

14 Matthews (1999:199-203) believes that Josephus (*Antiquity*, 20:17-53; 18:81-88) acknowledges that some Gentiles were converted to Judaism due to their interest in the religion of the Jew, and, as a result, they used their wealth to better the lives of

the Jewish people and their community. Among such women was Poppaea Sabina, the wife of Nero, who was a contemporary of Luke. It seems Luke had the same notion when he mentioned some women who were of help to the ministry of Jesus (Luke 8:1ff). This could probably be regarded as an example of displaying benefaction. The Lukan material also emphasises that such benefactions do not always go unrewarded. The woman who anointed the feet of Jesus was rewarded with eternal remembrance for this singular act of benefaction.

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