

Graduate Theological Union

Distinguished Faculty Lecture

“The God of Jesus in the Gospel
Sayings Source”

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Wednesday, November 18, 7:00 pm
Pacific School of Religion Chapel
Dr. Daniel Matt, Respondent

Each year the faculty honors one member as the
Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. Please join us for this year's
lecture to be given by Dr. Antoinette Wire.

Faculty Publications Fair

Wednesday, November 18
immediately following the Faculty Lecture
Richard Dinner Board Room
Flora Lamson Hewlett Library

Please join us for this reception honoring Dr. Wire and those
faculty members who have published books in the past six
months. Faculty publications will be on display.

One great advantage of the GTU is its location next to the University. I've discovered recently that each of us has fantasies that next year we will find time to cross the street and catch up on literary theory or sociology or some language that is falling out the back of our minds. May our resolutions this New Year bear fruit.

But the presence of the University also reminds us of our peculiar calling at the GTU. We are not a mini-university for the religious constituency who can't keep up in the big leagues. It is our great responsibility, and luxury, to speak about God. Believers give their voluntary gifts so that this task will not be neglected and leaders can be trained to return to their communities to speak to them of God. What an extraordinary thing in this time and place! It seemed to me appropriate in the context of a GTU lecture to speak of God, but I am not a systematic theologian nor the daughter of a theologian. Therefore I will speak as a student of biblical literature about God as seen in a particular part of the Christian scriptures, the Gospel Sayings Source.

Let me explain briefly what the Gospel Sayings Source is. Biblical scholars widely agree today that the parallel passages in the first three gospels and their order indicate that Mark was written first and used by the writers of Matthew and Luke. Yet there are a number of sayings of Jesus found in both Matthew and

Luke which are not in Mark at all. It was to explain these parallels that scholars a century ago proposed Matthew and Luke had a second common source perhaps older than Mark called the Sayings Source, or "Q for "Quelle," or the Double Tradition. This source cannot be perfectly reconstructed because we don't know the parts it contained which Matthew or Luke omitted. But I have made a copy in translation of my reconstruction of its minimal content, for you to check me by as I go or to read later. Where Matthew and Luke differ slightly I assume their source has the usage not typical of either gospel writer, and since Matthew reorganizes Jesus' speeches I largely assume Luke's order. Until we get a completely fresh theory to explain how the gospels developed based not on literary dependence but on oral modes of transmission, Markan priority is probably here to stay, and with Mark always comes his in-no-way identical twin, the Sayings Source.

The point where I differ from many other interpreters is in my insistence that this source is best read as a unit. I have found unconvincing the efforts of many scholars to distinguish early and late materials in the source. The sages of our time see the historical Jesus as a sage and read the aphorisms and paradoxical sayings of this source to be Jesus' voice, but the judgment sayings they take to be voices of a later decade when the community was rejected and turned to Gentile mission. On the other hand today's prophets see Jesus as a prophet of the social transformation of Israel announcing a coming kingdom of justice.

They take the teachings which cannot have served that aim to be secondary. I do not want to deny possible development in *the* community which transmitted this tradition, but community history should not be built by projecting our struggle between sages and prophets into a time and place when wisdom and prophecy were not sharply distinguished from each other. Better that we consider the Sayings Source as a whole and allow this Jesus--and we cannot get behind this community's Jesus--to share in his culture's mixtures.

The source does present theological problems since interpreters in our century have preferred to focus on Jesus' dying and rising as the heart of the Gospel following Paul and the early creeds, and more recently they are looking to Mark as the first written narrative of Jesus' life, or to the more elaborated theologies of Matthew, Luke and John. At the risk of sounding as though only this Sayings Source reflects the true Jesus, I want to focus strictly on it and ask how Jesus depicts God in this tradition. In the ecumenical and inter-faith context of the GTU I think the theology of this Jewish teacher and prophet--as transmitted by what may be the earliest literate Christian community--can in different ways instruct each of us and in some ways speak to all of us together.

The first third of the Sayings Source appears to be about John the Baptist and Jesus, beginning with John on Jesus as the coming one, and ending with Jesus on John as the greatest of the

prophets. But a sharper look shows that both figures are not focusing on the other here but on what God is doing through them and, as the intervening material known from the Sermon on the Mount highlights, on God's challenge to the people who hear them both. So if the two Jewish prophets and the question of their mutual relation frames this first part of the Sayings Source, it is God and the people of Israel and their relation provoked by the prophetic announcements that is its subject.

John's opening attack on those who come to be baptized, "Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Bear fruit to match your repentance..." shows that some hearers do not think they need full repentance. John tells them that the axe is already set at the root of the fruitless tree and needs only to be lifted to fell it and consign it to the fire. Or, in another image, the shovel is in hand to clear the threshing floor, the wheat to the barn and the chaff to the fire. Though the Baptist names God explicitly only as the one who can replace them "from these stones" if they rest on their laurels--God the Life-giver at work--John's prophecy climaxes in the two images of God the Life-taker with axe and shovel in hand ready to burn the deadwood. This is a baptism of spirit and fire that will make John's words and water look mild. Whether the agent of this firestorm is conceived as divine or human is not clear. But the issue is the arrival of one who will expose, not the wicked and indifferent, but the confident who feign repentance without bearing its fruits.

Jesus is introduced by the story in which Satan tempts him with the lure, "If you are God's son...." Only Satan calls Jesus "Son of God" in the Sayings Source, and Jesus responds from scripture very much in line with John's preaching against presumption. He says, human beings do not live by bread alone; human beings are not to serve their own glory but God only; human beings are not to test God's care for them. He wants to be a human being. When Satan leaves him he begins to tell the poor and abused that God's inheritance belongs to them and that they will be full and laugh and be rewarded with the prophets who were also abused. (I translate "God's inheritance" rather than "God's kingdom" or "reign" because the phrase in these sayings is never associated with God's ruling or judging but always with God bestowing a kingdom or inheritance, as once upon David.) By saying God's inheritance is theirs, Jesus assures the poor that the land or resources necessary for common livelihood and independence belong to them and to all who are incorporated into the family line of the prophets by their poverty or abuse. This includes those whose name is dirt on account of "the human being." (I translate Jesus' self-designation as "the human being" rather than "Son of Man." The Semitic construction "daughter or son of" is a way to put the generic, as in modern Hebrew's "בן־אדם" for the human species.)

The woes that follow the beatitudes--and Matthew's use of their vocabulary in his blessings suggests that they were in the common Sayings Source--explain that God's inheritance is not

arbitrarily withheld from the rich but has already been given them in full: "Woe to you rich, for you have what is coming to you." As the rich we may be relieved to be left out of the new dispensation when we hear what its life is like: "To the one who slaps you on the cheek, turn the other cheek, and to the one who takes your coat, do not deny your shirt." It is this loving their enemies and praying for their abusers that will show they are "sons of the Highest, who causes his sun to rise on evil and good, and gives rain on just and unjust." Their generosity is made possible, and also necessary, by the unlimited generosity of this Father: "Be merciful," or translated more sharply, "Withhold nothing, even as your Father withholds nothing." Because their Father does not judge, they cannot judge others. Jesus' remaining words that return to themes from the Baptist favor Matthew's rendition of the same sentence, "Be perfect," or "Be whole, as your Father is whole." Be the good tree that produces good fruit, the whole person who not only hears but does what is right and so builds a house founded on rock.

The integrity of this life lived from within the boundless inheritance of God is expressed in the language of a Father-son relation. This reflects a social setting where the slave or servant, and one must add the daughter or wife, are seen to have limited access to the Father's resources. But they are sons who can treat what is their Father's as their own--according to a saying later in this Source, no one knows father as son does, nor son as father--and it will only please the father if his son

becomes like him. Because of the peculiar prodigal nature of their Father, the poor and abused can afford not to withhold anything asked of them, even the shirt off their backs. From our distant vantage point in time and social class we see that this could be used to legitimate their abuse--and it will be--but here they take up the claim to be like this God before they can be taken--and put to us the question whether or not God is like this, literally "withholding nothing."

The transition back to the issue of Jesus' relation to John the Baptist is provided by the story of Jesus healing the centurion's slave at a distance. Jesus praises the centurion's faith, not because he is a Gentile convert to Judaism, let alone to Christianity, but because his confidence in God's resources for his slave's wellbeing exposes all of those who know God and expect nothing. When John's disciples then ask whether Jesus is the one that is coming--the one with axe in hand to cut and burn the deadwood--Jesus answers by pointing to this slave and others just healed, and adds, "Blessed are those not offended by me." Could we say that he sees the great discrepancy between John's fire-baptizer and himself, and yet he points to a certain complementarity: to use John's words, God is simultaneously gathering wheat into barns and burning chaff; good news for the disabled may be the other side of bad news for the privileged.

This picture of John and Jesus as complementary is confirmed in what follows. Jesus asks his hearers why they went out to see John--surely not to see a king in soft robes but to see a

prophet. Jesus calls him "more than a prophet," and "the greatest of all born of women"--yet, he adds, "the least in God's inheritance is greater." In this context Jesus cannot be presenting himself or his own followers as the least who are greater than John because he goes on to say that ever since John's time people are forcing their way into God's inheritance, a verb that suggests mobs who will not be kept out. The least of this crowd must be greater than the greatest prophet because they are the ones who have heard and responded.

The first third of the Sayings Source ends here by substituting for the pseudo-dichotomy of John and Jesus the true dichotomy between those who hear them and those who do not. The tax collectors and prostitutes who vindicated God by accepting John's baptism become the basis for an attack on "this generation" as Jesus names the others who saw them repent and still were not moved. The people of "this generation" are compared to children who sit down at the cross-roads and shout accusations at each other for not playing funeral and for not playing wedding. This is explained, "For John came neither eating nor drinking and you say, He has a demon! The human being came eating and drinking and you say, Look a free-loader and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! Yet Wisdom is vindicated by all her children." "This generation" takes John's stringency and Jesus' laxity in eating and drinking and plays them off against each other. Nevertheless, Jesus says, Wisdom is vindicated by all her children, or in a more homey

translation, "All Wisdom's children do her proud." "All" indicates a wider group than just Jesus and John, probably the crowd who hear them and press into God's inheritance. God appears here not as the generous Father but as the unacknowledged Wisdom of God, a mother dependent on "all her children" to prove her right. She is attacked in the insults to her children the prophets who are announcing God's inheritance. But she is also vindicated by her children who are rushing into God's inheritance when they hear and repent and begin to bear the fruits of a prodigal life.

In this first part of the Sayings Source two prophets have been juxtaposed, but it turns out that they are complementary in announcing God's inheritance. Two depictions of God, that of the Father who withholds nothing, and of Wisdom who claims vindication, have simply been juxtaposed.

The central third of the sayings source can be called "Representing God." First we see those pressing into God's inheritance themselves sent out and supplied, then rejected, and finally assured. Jesus sends them throughout Galilee to heal and carry the news of God's inheritance, having warned them that the human being they follow, unlike fox or bird, has no place to sleep. Because they have nothing, every house they enter is challenged to care for them and thereby to welcome God's peace. The Sayings Source does not number them or name them, nor even call them disciples, that is, learners, since they are

characterized strictly by their function to carry good news and to heal, and this defines who is one of them. Rejection cannot slow them down and they apparently stir up a duststorm shaking off their sandals from town to town. Their constant rejection is indicated by Jesus' lament over their own towns in Galilee which do not feed them. Capernaum and Bethsaida will outclass the great seaports of Tyre and Sidon in the sin-city category on judgment day--since, as Jesus puts it, whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.

Before he identifies this "one who sent me," Jesus returns to the "supply side" and praises God for these representatives: "You hid these things away from the wise and educated and revealed them to infants, yes, Father, just because you wanted to." And he blesses their eyes and ears since they are perceiving what prophets and kings longed to and never did. Whatever these "infants" want--daily bread, debt-forgiveness, rescue--they need only ask their Father, as Jesus' prayer teaches them. He concludes, "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you....If you who are evil know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father from heaven give good things to those who ask!"

This central section of the Sayings Source reaches its climax in Jesus' two long retorts to those who reject him on religious grounds. To those who call his exorcism demonic he gives the choice whether to take him as the collapse of Satan's

house by casting itself out--or as the arrival of God's inheritance. His proverbs exclude any middle ground: those who do not gather are scattering; the house without a good spirit will have seven bad ones. For those who want a sign he summons the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba to condemn "this generation" for not recognizing truth and wisdom.

Finally, with the warning "Watch lest the light in you be darkness!" he moves into a lament over the fate of the "separatists" and lawyers who are most exemplary in preserving the religious tradition. The care with which they are religious-keeping clean, tithing, appearing in public, holding people responsible to God, guarding God's inheritance, building memorials to the prophets--is contrasted step by step to the functional results of their conduct--extortion, injustice, people burdened, God's inheritance locked up, prophets killed and buried. The woes end in a judicial sentence: "Therefore the Wisdom of God said, I will send them prophets and the wise, some of whom they will kill, so that the blood of all the prophets poured out on the earth can be charged to this generation."

Now we hear the name of the one who sends the prophets, the Wisdom of God, and can understand Jesus' threat: "the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me." She is the one who sends the prophets and the wise to bring the world to accountability. Due to the long and lethal history of the use of this verdict of Wisdom about the blood of the prophets, I must state what should be obvious, that

it was not directed at an ethnic group or religion but was spoken by a prophet to certain exemplary practitioners within his own religious tradition. Christians who have aimed this against Jews, or we who allow others to do so, are in fact trying to evade the force of its judgment against ourselves as the religious practitioners whose tradition it became. In this way we confirm its truth--as a verdict of exclusion and murder against ourselves. Though we caution Jesus that our quality-control is not meant to be exclusion, and our building memorials is not killing prophets, Wisdom is unmoved. Her voice that Jesus quotes, "I will send them prophets, some of whom they will kill, so that the blood of all the prophets...can be charged to this generation," vindicates every person that has been burdened or locked out or killed--especially when it was done under legal or religious cover--and makes the latest generation of gate-keepers, however mild, responsible for all the victims of such "virtue." The converse truth is that those Wisdom sends out to be news-carriers of God's inheritance in every time and tradition bear no responsibility for their own rejections or deaths but stand vindicated by Wisdom's verdict against their abusers.

Yet they are understandably afraid, and the central section closes with two kinds of assurance for those who represent God. The first comes from the verdict of Wisdom and the impending reversals that will bring to light everything that is hidden. Therefore it is safer to fear ultimate judgment than death which is all that people can deliver. Other than the single verdict of

Wisdom against against those who kill prophets which I quoted, there is no clear image of God in a judging role in the Sayings Source. Euphemisms are preferred, as in the claim that those who acknowledge the human being will be acknowledged before God's angels, and those who deny will be denied. And even this denying is said to be forgivable, though speaking against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. The Holy Spirit appeared once before with fire in the Baptist's preaching as the instrument of an ultimate baptism or judgment, and it may signify God as justice. This is also suggested by the feminine gender of both Spirit and Wisdom in probable earlier Aramaic forms of these sayings. It may be that only the female face of God is able to represent judgment directly because she is seen not as enthroned but as herself abused in every of abuse of her children. Speaking against the Holy Spirit may be not forgiven because, as mother of "all her children," the Spirit or Wisdom is the ultimate appeal of the abused and so cannot finally be mocked.

God's other face gives the second kind of assurance which comes not from judgment but from nature--assurance from sparrows the Father guards and crows the Father feeds, assurance from the lilies dressed by God more finely than Solomon though they are here today and gone tomorrow. Although no excuse is possible for abusing the Holy Spirit, one can seek God's inheritance without fear because "your Father knows (what) you need." Even the storehouse in heaven is not introduced as useful in time of judgment but as anchor for the heart, "Make heaven your

storehouse...for where your stores are, there will your heart be also."

There is a single message from both nature and justice for those who represent God: do not be afraid. The reason is doubly spoken: your Father will provide; Wisdom's children will vindicate her.

If we expect in the final third of the Sayings Source a simple resolution of this double speech, we will be disappointed. Neither the Father nor Wisdom is named again, being eclipsed, it seems, in a final demonstration of the shock of God's inheritance. Yet each does make a brief appearance that shows how God's giving and God's accounting take place in the arrival of God's inheritance.

The section is framed by warnings, and those at the beginning are parabolic, "If the owner had realized at what hour the thief were coming...;" "If that slave...begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink and get drunk...;" "Settle with your accuser on your way to court...." The point in each case is that if you don't act now before you face the thief, master or judge, you will take a great loss, and this shows he is talking here to people with something to lose. The story of the thief ends, "You have no idea what time the human being is coming." Since Jesus is already present, this sounds as if he is announcing another human being such as the apocalyptic human being who comes to judge in Daniel 7:13, or is this rather a

later voice-over of someone awaiting Jesus' return? But in the context of the Sayings Source it at least remains part of Jesus' own self-naming. Jesus first defines himself in contrast to John the Baptist as a garden-variety human being "eating and drinking" like everyone else, but the name comes to include a sharp realism--"the human being has no where to lay his head." It then takes on some representative meaning--whoever acknowledges me before human beings the human being will acknowledge before God--and now, without letting anything go, it reclaims through the story of a night thief John the Baptist's threat of one who is coming--as Jesus says, "You have no idea when the human being is coming." This self-reference is confirmed by the culminating warning, "Don't think I came to cast peace on the earth. I came not to cast peace but a sword. For in one house they will be divided son against father, daughter against mother, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

This sword cast by the human being which cuts to the heart of the patriarchal family where the mother and the daughter-in-law hold everything together turns out to be God's inheritance. It begins innocently enough. But the mustard seed thrown out in the yard makes a nesting tree in months, and yeast hidden in fifty pounds of flour fills the room in hours. This rank inheritance, which can't even be thrown out or hid, and is wide open to the poor who have broken in once-closed doors, is experienced by others as a narrow gate or a locked door. Familiar voices call out, "Lord, open up for us. We ate and

drank with you, and you taught in our streets!" The answer comes, "I don't know you. Get away from me, all of you that do injustice." Jesus explains, "Outside there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in God's inheritance but you thrown out." It is not said that ethnic Gentiles replace Jews in God's favor, as we often read the New Testament, but that outsiders replace insiders among those who ate with Jesus and every expectation is undermined in the multiple reversals set off by God's inheritance. He continues, "Look out! The last will be first and the first last," and, "All who exalt themselves will be humbled and the humble exalted."

When someone shouts, "Blessed is the one who will eat in God's inheritance," this enthusiasm is met with an account of a great party where no one invited shows up so that the poor and blind and lame must be impressed to fill the house. This is the shock of God's inheritance, both who is not there and who is there. Luke later turns the story into a model of Christian hospitality, "when you hold a feast invite the poor" (Lk 14:13), and Matthew makes it an allegory of the church where bad and good are mixed until the host checks for proper wedding garments (Mt 22:1-14). But in the Sayings Source we have only the guests excusing themselves and the street people piling in, crutches, canes, Safeway carts and all.

If this is God's inheritance, what does it tell us about the God of Jesus? When reasonable excuses are not accepted and being

an insider gets no respect, one looks around for Wisdom. Midway in announcing the shock Jesus begins to lament the holy city itself, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children the way a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you didn't want it." Jesus in the metaphor of the hen takes on the persona of Wisdom who has appealed over and over through her prophets and the wise. The verdict that follows is not a curse on the temple but seems to be Wisdom's familiar threat to withdraw: "Look, your house is left for you," or perhaps caustically, "Look, you can keep your house. But I tell you, you will not see me until you say, Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name." At the heart of holiness, where people most expect the in-gathering of God's people--on holy hills such as ours--she most continually finds herself put off by people who have no time for her invitation. Yet even here the shock of God's inheritance is that Wisdom's children are already doing her proud. The outcast make space for others, the disabled become whole, the last first, the poor filled and laughing in God's inheritance. Wherever her children are welcomed her brood are being gathered under her wings.

The Father who is generous to a fault also makes an appearance in the story of a shepherd who is fool enough to risk his whole flock for one sheep. His satisfaction stated in the last line--"Just so there is more joy in heaven over this one than over the ninety-nine who are not lost"--contrasts sharply

with the frustration of Wisdom as the hen without her chicks. The father reaches out, withholding nothing, in order to overcome loss in joy, whereas Wisdom exposes her prophets to abuse and stoning in order to make the truth plain that no one will see her until her children are welcomed. I will come back to that disparity.

The Sayings Source ends with warnings to those who seem bent on losing God's inheritance. They appear in the last act not killing and looting but very respectably trying to serve God and Mammon, thinking to evade God's law against adultery through divorce, rationing forgiveness and tripping up the vulnerable, pursuing business-as-usual as if fire and brimstone were not falling from heaven, and burying God's gift in the ground for fear of losing it. Here are those of us who hedge our bets concerning God's inheritance, and the last third of the Sayings Source is intent on giving us its shock. Each of these final warnings works not by threat of divine reprisal but by exposure to reality. Jesus says: You simply cannot serve two masters at once; God's uniting two people does not pass away; better for you if you drown with a millstone around your neck than to harm these little ones; your business-as-usual and secret knowledge will be exposed on the human being's day as when lightening lights the whole sky or vultures circle over a corpse; and about money, simply a folk proverb: those who have (and use it) will be given more, but those who do not will have it taken away.

After these warnings about the double life, Jesus speaks the last sentence in the Sayings Source to those around him, "You are

those who have continued with me and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The recognized rulers will not judge God's people, but judgment, he claims, will fall to "those who have stuck it out with me," which in the context of the Sayings Source are the last and least of Israel who God takes to be first and greatest. Since judging is the identifying role of rulers in the ancient Near East, this final saying pronounces that the poor and abused, to whom Jesus' blessings first deeded God's inheritance, are also its rulers. It is, if you will, the day of the human being. Theologically put, it means that God does not rule God's inheritance. This may give us more of a shock than does the social reversal which experience has taught us may turn out to be a palace coup that gives rise to its own replacement. But if God does not rule, we have no "friend at the top," no way to maintain leverage when out of power, no system to learn to use. In what sense can God's inheritance then still be called God's? As far as I can see, Jesus calls it God's because it is God who does not want to rule or arrange privileges and therefore abdicates this inheritance in favor of the least. But God remains active in two other senses. On the one hand the Father provides whatever people ask so that they can live and do justice. On the other hand Wisdom does not withdraw but continues to send prophets and the wise to keep her rejection visible until she is vindicated by all her children.

In closing I want to touch briefly on three issues which

face us today in interpreting this theology. First, do abused Wisdom and the generous Father reinforce gender stereotypes that are destructive for us? Second, why was Wisdom forgotten and the Father enthroned in Christian theology? And third, can multiple images of God be integrated in one committed common life?

The first question is whether we should resist "Father" and "Wisdom" as names for God, knowing as we do that, while sexual difference is natural, gender expectations are socially constructed, religiously legitimated, and tend to maintain power structures. There is no denying that these two ways of naming God reflect people's social experiences of father and mother in a society where males had the resources to give and women had to learn endurance. Yet at present I find the value of these names for God to be greater than their danger, if they can be understood as they were within their own religious context, where I believe they worked largely as counterweights to the dominant gender stereotypes. The dominant paternal image was, and probably is, the father who takes care of his own in order to increase his relative strength in the world. In contrast, I wish I had time to tell some of the rabbinical stories about God the indulgent Father. This Father ignores with no difficulty the machinations of the wise and the powerful who would make alliance with him, but he simply cannot say no to children, nor to people of childlike faith who pray fervently for rain or for healing, nor even to disreputable people who have done one good deed from the heart. This God is Jesus' Father in the Sayings Source,

never beholden to the powerful to increase divine power, but giving sun and rain to all, and supplying those whom Wisdom sends out as lambs among wolves with whatever they ask.

Wisdom's tradition shows she is equally unique among neglected mothers and wronged women. In Proverbs 1-9 she appears on the street shouting for attention, making the same preparations of her home and using the same call as the prostitute (9:1-6, 13-18), but she alone is not welcomed. Yet her authority is secure from before the world's creation (8:22-31) and she can even say, "Because I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded..., I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you" (1:24-26). It is not weakness when Wisdom in I Enoch 42 returns to heaven to live because no one will receive her on earth. The Sayings Source shows that her power base is sure, her withdrawls rhetorical, her outreach unrelenting. She is the rejected woman we would all like to be in her strength. Who can doubt that she will in due time be vindicated by all her children? So although divine images of the generous man and the abused woman can be used to confirm the worst gender stereotypes, in the Jewish traditions where Jesus found them they work to demonstrate on the one hand that God cannot resist the weak and on the other that God outlasts the powerful.

My second question concerns why Wisdom was forgotten and the Father enthroned in Christian theology. This is far too complex to explicate here, but one early impetus could not be more

obvious. Who would not prefer the father who withholds nothing to the long-abused mother insisting on accountability? The church quickly identified itself as the poor--in heart--and the hungry--after righteousness (Mt 5:3, 6)--and refashioned the Father as ours not theirs, a domesticated Father providing everything needed for our family at their expense, including our vindication and their judgment.

John's gospel may be the most poignant window into this transition. Though it is no longer Wisdom but the Father who is said to have sent Jesus his Son, Wisdom is the one who leads off the gospel at the point of creation itself, renamed as the Word who was with God and was God (1:1-18). She was life and light, yet when she came to her own world it did not receive her, but all those who receive her become children of God. When we read, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us," we see that Jesus is identified as Wisdom in the flesh, and at the end of the prologue he is named the only-begotten God who makes the Father known. This both narrows and extends Wisdom's identification with her prophets in the Sayings Source. Now only one prophet is named as her envoy, but he is taken as the very Wisdom of God. In the fourth gospel Jesus' death consummates Wisdom's rejection, his resurrection becomes her vindication or glorification, and the Spirit sent by the Father as "another Advocat" expands her teaching, exposing and judging so that others can do greater works than Jesus (13:31-16:15). But--and here is the tragedy, the blasphemy, in this rich Jewish-rooted theology--all of this

occurs within a highly sectarian community claiming exclusive access to the Father through the Son overagainst those they call "the Jews." Is it possible or not possible for Christians so to repent of the evil that they can receive again the good in this gospel's vision of God?

My last question is about that prodigal Father and that longsuffering Mother and whether they can manage to get along with each other within one human commitment to God. I am hesitant to even surface the question, as you may have sensed. In terms of this study, if these two images cannot refer to the same God, the Sayings Source cannot be read as a whole and we must ask which was the God of Jesus and which the God of those who refashioned his sayings. In our piety the male God is so firmly entrenched a change seems hopeless. Also I hesitate because who can know about these things? Even with our own parents we learn to stay at a respectful distance and not inquire how they can possibly have gotten along with each other all these years--how much more do we not ask such questions of God.

Yet, just among ourselves, we cannot afford to ignore the question. To do so assigns Wisdom to the history books and the Father to the throne, where neither can function. For us it is not just ideas that are at stake, but our identities, our social relations and the limits of history. On such high seas we cannot be squeamish about questions of compatibility. If a thousand theories of this cosmos are needed before we get the paradigm shift that reorganizes all the data, how much more a

thousand visions of God before our theology comes up whole.

Historically, Jesus' integrating of different ways to see God reflects the composite and inclusive nature of the Jewish tradition. The Father was invoked in prayer and personal claims on God, Wisdom in teaching and theodicy, God's inheritance in hopes of communal restoration. These and other names for God might be favored by different groups, but the wholeness of Israel has always meant a fullness--if not a neatness--of God. The church has also been rich in experience of God, and its dogmatic periods can be seen as efforts to catch up with itself, if often in misguided ways. Today when most confessional groups in our culture evade theological definition in order to include all comers, and then find few coming, it is a challenge to think how we might clarify our theological vision by reclaiming our rich history and our real experiences of God. This would not only strengthen our faith and work but might build ties across communities and even across religious traditions.

A last word on the Father and Wisdom. What makes clear to me that each is the presence of a single Holy One is the full extension on our behalf that they have in common, whether in supply or demand. The real question ~~is~~ for me is not conceptual but practical: Is his storehouse without limit? Is her patience without end? And the answer from these sayings of Jesus is, Don't count on it. To the rich Jesus says, "You have what is coming to you," and in Wisdom's voice, "You will not see me until you say, Blessed is the one who comes in God's name." Our social

world is almost a replay of the early Roman empire in which one nation claims hegemony, with laws and arms in place to assure that wealth flows from poor to rich--and we are its beneficiaries. Therefore God's inheritance is not likely thrown open for us as it is to outsiders, but it has a narrow gate, and we enter only by shock and repentance. But if we do enter the world ruled by the last and the least, Jesus taught that the Father is ready to give whatever we ask when Wisdom sends us out with news of this inheritance. And the word is that she will be vindicated by all her children.



Sayings Source of Matthew and Luke: A Reconstruction Translated
Antoinette Wire

Part I. All Wisdom's Children

I A. John and Jesus (from Lk 3:7-9,16-17; 4:1-13 and Mt parallels)/1/

He (John) said to those who came out to be baptized by him, Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Bear fruit to match your repentance, and don't begin saying to each other, We have Abraham for our father, for I tell you that God can raise children of Abraham from these rocks. Already the axe is set at the root of the trees, so every tree not bearing good fruit is cut out and thrown into the fire. I myself baptize you with water, but one stronger than I is coming whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with holy spirit and fire. His shovel is in his hand to clear off his threshing ground and gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

Jesus was led in the spirit in the desert for forty days tested by the devil. He ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. And the devil said to him, If you are God's Son, tell this rock to become bread. But Jesus answered, It is written, the human being does not live by bread alone. Then he led him to Jerusalem and set him on the parapet of the temple and said to him, If you are God's Son, throw yourself down, for it is written, He will command his angels concerning you and on their hands they will lift you up lest you trip on a rock. Jesus said to him, It is said, You shall not test the Lord your God. Then the devil led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and said to him, All these I will give to you if you worship me. Jesus said to him, It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him alone shall you serve. Then the devil left him.

I B. Jesus and the People (from Lk 6:20-26, 27-36, 37-42, 43-49 and Mt parallels)

And he said,

Blessed are you poor since God's inheritance belongs to you.

Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be full.

Blessed are you who are crying now, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you and insult you and treat your name as dirt on account of the human being. Rejoice and jump for joy since your reward in heaven is great, because that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

But woe to you rich since you have what is coming to you.

Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and cry.

Woe when all people speak well of you, because that is how their fathers treated the false-prophets./2/

But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who abuse you. To the one who slaps you on the cheek, turn the other

cheek, and to the one who takes your coat, do not deny your shirt. To those who ask, give, and from those who take your things do not demand them back. Just as you want people to treat you, treat them the same. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Don't even tax collectors do the same? And if you do good to those who do you good, what credit is that to you? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? But be sons of the Highest, who raises his sun on evil and good and rains on just and unjust. Withhold nothing, as your Father withholds nothing.

Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. For the measure you measure with will be used to measure you. A student is not above the teacher. It is enough that a student be like the teacher. The blind cannot lead the blind, can they? Will they not both fall into a pit?^{3/} Why do you see the speck in your friend's eye but not notice the beam in your own eye? How can you say to your friend, Let me get the speck out of your eye, and, look, there is a beam in your eye. Hypocrite, first take the beam out of your eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your friend's eye.

A good tree does not make bad fruit, nor does a bad tree make good fruit. Every tree is known by its fruit. Are grapes gathered from thorn-bushes or figs from thistles? The good person from the heart's good storehouse produces good, and the evil from the evil produces evil. For the mouth speaks from the heart's overflow. But why do you call me, master, master, and not do the things I say? Whoever hears my words and does them is like someone building a house on rock. The floodwater burst against that house, and it did not fall, because it was founded on rock. But whoever has heard and not acted is like someone who built a house on sand. The floodwater burst against it and it fell, and its fall was great.

I C. Jesus and John (from Lk 7:1-10, 18-23, 24-28; 16:16 but in Mt sequence; 7:29-35 and Mt parallels.)

When he went into Capernaum a centurion approached and entreated him, My slave is sick and about to die. And he said to him, I will come and heal him. The centurion said, Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. Only say a word and my boy will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority who have soldiers under me, and I say to one, Go, and he goes, and to another, Come, and he comes, and to my slave, Do this, and he does it. Hearing this, Jesus marveled and said to those following him, I say to you, not in Israel have I found such faith. And the boy was healed at that hour.

And hearing all these things, John sent his disciples saying, Are you the one who is coming or do we look for another? And Jesus answered them, Go tell John what you hear and see. Blind see again and lame walk, lepers are cleansed and deaf hear, dead are raised and poor tell good news, and blessed is the person not scandalized with me.^{4/}

When they went he began to speak to the crowds about John,

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? Look, those are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, Look, I am sending my messenger before your face who will prepare your way before you. I say to you, there is no one born of women greater than John, but the least in God's inheritance is greater than he. The law and the prophets spoke until John. Since then the good news about God's inheritance is being announced and everyone forces their way into it.

The tax collectors and prostitutes vindicated God by accepting John's baptism. But even when you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. What can I compare this generation to? It is like children sitting down in the marketplace and shouting at each other, We played the flute and you didn't dance! We mourned and you didn't cry! For John came neither eating nor drinking and you say, He has a demon! The human being came eating and drinking and you say, Look, a freeloader and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! Yet Wisdom is vindicated by all her children.

Part II. Representing God

II A. Sent and Supplied (from Lk 9:57-62; 10:2-12, 13-15, 16, 21-24; 11:2-4; 9-13 and Mt parallels)

And someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the human being has no place to lie down. Another said, Master, permit me to go and bury my father. But he said to him, Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.

He told them, the harvest is great but the workers are few. So beg the owner of the harvest to send workers out into his harvest. Look, I send you as sheep among wolves. Take no money bag, nor sack, nor sandals, nor greet anyone on the way. Whenever you enter a house say, Peace to this house, and if the people there want peace your peace will rest on them, but if not it will return to you. Stay in the same house, eating and drinking what they do, since the worker is worth a wage. And if a town welcomes you, heal the sick and say to them, God's inheritance has come near you. But if the town does not welcome you, shake off your feet the dust of the town, because I tell you that it will be more bearable on judgment day for Sodom than for that town.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the acts of power done in you were done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have long since repented in sackcloth and ashes. But in fact it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon in judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, you think you will be raised to heaven? You will go down to hell.

Whoever hears you hears me, and whoever rejects you rejects me. But whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.

Jesus said at that hour. I praise you, Father, Master of Heaven and Earth, that you hid these things away from the wise and the educated and revealed them to infants, yes Father, just because you wanted to. All things have been passed down to me by my father and no one knows the son the way the father does or the father the way the son does--and those to whom the son wants to make disclosure. Blessed are your eyes for seeing and your ears for hearing! For I tell you that many prophets and kings longed to see the things you see and never saw them, and to hear the things you hear and never heard them.

Pray like this: Father, your name be holy. Your inheritance come. Give us our daily bread each day. And forgive us what we owe as we also forgive those who owe us. And do not lead us into testing.

Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds, and the one who knocks gets in the door. Or will any of you when your son asks for bread give him a stone, or when your daughter asks for a fish give her a snake? So if you who are evil know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father from heaven give good things to those who ask! /5/

II B. Rejected (from Lk 11:14-26, 29-33, 34-35, 39-52 and Mt parallels)

When a mute demon was cast out, the mute person spoke and the crowd was astounded, yet some said, It is by Beelzebul the prince of demons that he casts out demons. But knowing their thoughts he told them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and if Satan is divided against himself how can his kingdom stand? If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast out?--so they will be your judges. But if it is by God's finger that I cast out demons, then God's inheritance has overtaken you. Whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters. When the unclean spirit has come out of a person, it wanders through places with no water seeking rest and not finding any. Then it says, I will go back into my house where I came from. And when it comes it finds everything swept and in order. Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and the last state of that person is worse than the first.

Others wanted a sign from him and he said, An evil generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it but Jonah's sign. For just as Jonah was, so the human being will be. The Queen of the South will be raised in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it, for she came from the other side of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom, and, look, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it because they repented at Jonah's announcement, and, look, something greater than Jonah is here.

No one lighting a lamp puts it under a bucket but on a

lampstand to give everyone in the house light. The eye is the body's lamp. If your eye is sharp, your whole body is lit up. But if it is evil, your body is dark. Look whether the light in you is darkness.

You separatists, you clean the outside of the cup, but the inside is full of extortion. First clean the inside so the outside might be clean.

Woe to you separatists, for you tithe mint and ignore justice. You were expected to do these without ignoring those.

Woe to you. You love the front seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

Woe to you, for you are like disguised graves.

Woe to you lawyers too, for you give people heavy burdens and you do not move them with a finger.

Woe to you lawyers, for you lock up God's inheritance. You don't come in and you don't let people come in.

Woe to you, for you build the tombs of the prophets, but your fathers killed them. So you witness that you are children of your fathers, for they killed them and you build on it.

Therefore God's Wisdom said, "I will send them prophets and the wise, and they will kill some of them, so that the blood of all the prophets poured out on the earth might be charged to this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it will be charged to this generation."

II C. Afraid and Assured (from Lk 12:2-3, 4-7, 8-12, 22-31, 33-34 and Mt parallels)

Nothing is covered which will not be uncovered or hidden which will not be made known. Whatever you said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you whispered in storerooms will be proclaimed on the roofs.

Do not fear those who kill the body and after this can do nothing more. But fear the one who after killing has power to throw into hell. Are sparrows not sold for two coins?--and not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

Each one who acknowledges me before human beings the human being will acknowledge before God's angels. But whoever denies me before human beings will be denied before God's angels. And whoever will speak against the human being will be forgiven. But whoever says anything against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they turn you in, don't worry how or what you should speak, because in that hour what you should speak will be given to you.

Therefore I tell you, Don't worry about your life and what you will eat, nor about your body and what you will wear. Is life not more than food and body more than clothing? Look at the crows, since they neither sow nor harvest nor gather into barns, and God feeds them. Are you not worth more than they? Which of you by worry can add one inch to your lifespan? And why worry

about other things? Notice the lillies how they grow--they neither labor nor spin, but I tell you, Solomon in all his glory was not dressed up like one of these. If God so clothes the grass in the field--here today and tomorrow thrown into the fire--how much more you, you faithless ones. So don't ask what you should eat or what you should drink, since all the world's nations seek these things and your Father knows you need them. But seek God's inheritance and these will come as a bonus. Make heaven your storehouse where thieves do not encroach nor rust decay, for where your stores are, there will your heart be also.

Part III. The Shock of God's Inheritance

III A. Warnings (from Lk 12:39-40, 42-46, 49-56, 57-59 and Mt parallels)

But know this, that if the owner had realized at what hour the thief were coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. And become ready yourselves, for you have no idea what time the human being is coming.

Who is the faithful and wise slave that the master appoints over his servants to give them their food on time? Blessed is the slave whom this master finds doing so when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will appoint him to be responsible over all his possessions. But if that slave says in his heart, My master is delayed, and begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink and get drunk, that slave's master will come on a day when he does not expect him and in an hour he does not know and will cut him off, and his fate will be with the unfaithful.

Do not think I came to cast peace on the earth. I came not to cast peace but a sword. For in one house they will be divided son against father, daughter against mother, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. Evenings you say: a good day, the sky is firey. And mornings: storm today, the sky is dark and firey. You know how to read the look of the sky, but you cannot read this time.

Settle with your accuser on the way to court, lest he deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and he throw you into prison. I tell you, you will not get out of there until you have paid your last coin.

III B. The Shock (from Lk 13:18-21, 24-30, 34-35; 14:11, 15-24, 26-27 with 17:33 in Mt's sequence; 14:34-35; 15:4-7 and Mt parallels)

God's inheritance is like a mustard seed that a man threw in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky sheltered in its branches. God's inheritance is like yeast that a woman took and hid in fifty pounds of flour until it was completely leavened.

Enter through the narrow door, for many try to enter and cannot. Once the owner has locked the door you will say, Lord, open up for us! He will answer, I don't know you. You will say, We ate and drank with you and you taught in our streets! And he

will say, I don't know you. Get away from me, all of you that do injustice. Outside there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in God's inheritance but you thrown out. And they will come from east and west and will sit to eat in God's inheritance. And, look, the last will be first and the first last.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children the way a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, you can have your house! /6/ But I tell you, you will not see me until you say, Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name.

All who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Someone said, Blessed is the one who will eat in God's inheritance. /7/ But he said to him, A certain person made a great feast and invited many people, and sent his servant at the hour of the meal to say to those invited, Come for it is already prepared. But they went away excusing themselves, one to his own field, one to his business and another to his wife. Then the host was angry and said to his servant, Go quickly to the streets and gather here the poor and crippled and blind and lame. Go out into the roads and alleys and force them to come so that my house might be filled.

If any come to me and do not hate their own father and mother and brothers and sisters, they cannot be my followers. Those who do not carry their own cross and come after me cannot be my followers. Those who seek to preserve their life will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it.

If salt has become tasteless, what can it be salted with? It is good for nothing. They throw it out.

Which one of you who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them does not leave the ninety-nine and go after the lost until it is found? I tell you that when you find it you rejoice. Just so there is more joy in heaven over this one than over the ninety-nine that are not lost.

III C. Warnings (from Lk 16:13, 17-18; 17:1-4, 6, 23-24, 26-30, 34-35, 37; 19:12-27; 22:28-30 and Mt parallels)

No one is able to serve two masters, for you will either hate the one and love the other, or you will cling to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to collapse. Every man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

People are bound to stumble, but woe to the person that causes it. It would be better for that one to have a millstone put around the neck and be thrown into the sea than for one of these little ones to be made to stumble. If your brother sins, point it out to him, and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day and turns to you seven times

saying, I repent, you will forgive him. If you have faith like a mustard seed, say to this sycamore, be uprooted and planted in the sea, and it would obey you.

They tell you, Look in the desert! Don't go off. Look in the storeroom! Don't trust them. For as the lightening comes from the east and shines to the west, so will the human being's day be. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the human being's days. They were eating and drinking, marrying and being married--until the day Noah went into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. They were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building. But on the day Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all./8/ So will the human being's day be. Two will be on one bed, one taken and the other left. Two will be grinding at one mill, one taken and the other left. Where the body is, there the eagles will gather.

A certain man going on a journey called ten slaves of his and gave them a hundred-drachma coin and said, Trade until I come. When he came he made an accounting. The first came and said, Master, your coin made ten coins. And he said, Well done, good servant, you were faithful in the least thing, take power over ten cities. The second said, Your coin, master, made five coins. And he said to this one, You will be over five cities. And the other one came saying, Lord, look at your coin which I laid away in a napkin. For I feared you because you are a harsh man, harvesting what you have not sown. He said to him, evil servant, you know I am a man harvesting what I have not sown. Why did you not deposit my money and when I came I would get it with interest? Take his coin away and give it to the one who has a ten. To each who has it will be given, but from the one who does not have, what he has will be taken.

You are those who have contined with me. And you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Notes

1/The references are to Luke's version of the common Sayings Source of Matthew and Luke here reconstructed and translated. The spacing between references separates the paragraphs which follow, though blessings and woes are also indented.

2/Matthew's use in his beatitudes of the terms I translate "what is coming to you," "mourn," and "speak (well) of you" suggests that he knows the woes from the common source.

3/The order of the student saying and the blind saying are reversed for clarification with some support from Matthew.

4/The verb "telling good news" is read as middle voice.

5/I translate the second, unspecified example as "daughter" due to the inclusive reference to "children" that follows.

6/My translation of the literal "Your house is left to you" tries to make sense of it and the adversative that follows.

7/Both Luke and Matthew refer to this story as one about God's inheritance. I adapt Luke's opening to show this.

8/Lot's story is so close to Noah's that Matthew's dropping a doublet seems more likely than Luke's adding it to the source.