DAVID M. SHAW
North-West University (Potchefstroom, South Africa)
Perth Bible College (Australia)

Restoring a Hemorrhaged Identity: The Identity and Impact of the Bleeding Woman in Luke 8:40–56

ABSTRACT: The hemorrhaging woman of Luke 8 (and Mark 5) is almost universally presumed to be of Jewish origin, but there are clues in the Gospel accounts and other primary sources to suggest that she may be a Gentile. On this understanding, her healing signals the fulfillment of Jesus's words in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30), as extension of God's mission to the Gentiles. Moreover, her faith acts as a model for both Jairus and the early church, consequently subverting expected cultural and social norms. This investigation weighs these options by considering Luke's immediate and surrounding narrative framework alongside some linguistic parallels. By doing so, I aim to establish that seeing the woman as a Gentile is a reasonable understanding of the text, alongside its sociological/cultural implications for the early church.

KEYWORDS: Luke 8:40–56, hemorrhaging woman, Jairus, Gentile, identity, narrative, discipleship, Gospels, faith

The following study reconsiders the identity of the hemorrhaging woman in Luke 8:40–56.[1] A glance at many works concerning this woman reveals

1. While the focus of this essay will be on Luke's Gospel, the parallel account in Mark's Gospel will be referred to from time to time as necessary. An earlier version of this research was presented at the Australia and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS) Annual Conference in Brisbane, Australia, July 1–4, 2018. Special thanks go to Louise Gosbell for early feedback and direction toward primary sources that helped improve the final form. Gratitude must also be extended to my Perth Bible College colleague André van Oudtshoorn, to Jeff Aernie at Charles Sturt University / United Theological College for encouragement along the way, and to Don West and the team at Trinity Theological College, Perth, for the use of their library.

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an assumption that she is of Jewish origin.[2] The assumption is detected in the fact that expositors of the text commonly refer to the Torah's purity laws in relation to her ailment as part of their analysis.[3] A closer reading of

2. The most recent survey of scholarship on this pericope can be found in Arie W. Zwiep, "Jairus, His Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman (Mk 5.21–43; Mt. 9.18–26; Lk. 8.40–56): Research Survey of a Gospel Story about People in Distress," *Currents in Biblical Research* 13 (2015): 351–87. For our purposes, attention will be directed toward the hemorrhaging woman with primary reference to Luke's Gospel.

3. Candida R. Moss, "The Man with the Flow of Power: Porous Bodies in Mark 5:25–34," *JBL* 129 (2010): 508–9, makes a similar observation (see n. 3 for her own brief overview and references). Among Markan commentators, see, for instance, Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC 2 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 125; David E. Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel: Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 286; idem, *Mark*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 219; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 267; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 159; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 163; Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 296; C. S. Mann, ed., *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 284–85. Among Lukan commentators, see James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 254–55; R. T. France, *Luke*, Teach the Text Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 153; David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 367; François Bovon, *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, trans. Christine M. Thomas, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 337–38; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 346; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 793; John Nolland, *Luke 1:1–9:20*, WBC 35A (Dallas: Word, 1989), 419; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I–IX: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 28 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1981), 746; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 344; Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium 1,1–9,50*, HThKNT 3/1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 492. Among recent book chapters and journal articles, see Kent E. Brower, "'Who Then Is This?': Christological Questions in Mark 4:35–5:43," *EQ* 81 (2009): 303 n. 32; Charles E. Powell, "The 'Passivity' of Jesus in Mark 5:25–34," *BSac* 162 (2005): 69, 71; Marla J. Schierling Selvidge, "Mark 5:25–34 and Leviticus 15:19–20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations," *JBL* 103 (1984): 619–23; Shaye J. D. Cohen, "Menstruants and the Sacred in Judaism and Christianity," in *Women's History and Ancient History*, ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 273–99; Charlotte Fonrobert, "The Woman with a Blood-Flow (Mark 5.24–34) Revisited: Menstrual Laws and Jewish Culture in Christian Feminist Hermeneutics," in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, JSNTSup 148 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 121–40; Susan Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, JSNTSup 259 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 52–72; Willard M. Swartley, "The Role of Women in Mark's Gospel: A Narrative Analysis," *BTB* 27 (1997): 16–22;

the Lukan text, however, reveals clues that may point one in the direction of considering the woman to be a Gentile. I begin by highlighting a number of early Christian sources that demonstrate an allegorical reading of the text implying the woman to be representative of Gentile believers. After considering these early sources, I move on to the immediate context of Luke 8:40–56 followed by a wider look at some related Lukan passages including Jesus's healing of a Jewish leper (5:12–16) and the healing of a centurion's servant (7:1–10, 18–35). Regarding the immediate context, I suggest that the catena of four miracles are arranged in a thematic chiasm whereby the first and fourth miracles (Jesus calming the storm and raising Jairus's daughter) present as private miracles for Jewish disciples, while the second and third miracles (the healing of the demoniac and hemorrhaging woman) are performed publicly on behalf of Gentiles. In Luke's wider context, Jesus's conversation with a Jewish leper provides an important contrast to our understanding of his conversation with the hemorrhaging woman, while the healing of the Roman Centurion's servant demonstrates Luke's concern for Jesus's inclusion of Gentiles within his mission.

I also reflect on some linguistic parallels from Luke in relation to the Sermon on the Plain (6:17–19), the healing of 10 lepers (17:11–19), and Jesus's command to the hemorrhaging woman to "go in peace" (8:48). In each case, parallels or echoes of language that connect to our chosen text are present, giving us reason to ponder their relationship to one another. Before closing, I deliberate briefly on some practical implications of my thesis with regard to questions of discipleship and ecclesial unity. While no singular part of the investigation is definitive, the cumulation of evidence may lead one to conclude reasonably that the hemorrhaging woman could, in fact, be a Gentile.

The Hemorrhaging Woman in Early Christian Literature

A number of early Christian sources give warrant to the possibility that the hemorrhaging woman in Luke 8 may have been a Gentile. Two sources to which I refer are *Acts of Pilate* 7, and Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 7.18.[4] In the latter, Eusebius states that the woman came from the Caesarea Philippi and that,

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Louise A. Gosbell, *The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame: Physical and Sensory Disability in the Gospels of the New Testament*, WUNT 2/369 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 230–77. Frédéric Louis Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*, trans. E. W. Shalders and M. D. Cusin, 5th English ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1875), 393, may be a rare exception. He cites Eusebius without any comment or contradiction.

4. I first came across these sources in Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 165 n. 41.

while visiting the city, he saw a bronze statue dedicated to her memory and encounter with Jesus:

> Her house was pointed out in the city, and a wonderful memorial of the benefit the Saviour conferred upon her was still there. On a tall stone base at the gates of her house stood a bronze statue of a woman, resting on one knee and resembling a suppliant with arms outstretched. Facing this was another of the same material, an upright figure of a man with a double cloak neatly draped over his shoulders and his hand stretched out to the woman. . . . This statue, which was said to resemble the features of Jesus, was still there in my own time, so that I saw it with my own eyes when I resided in the city. It is not at all surprising that Gentiles who long ago received such benefits from our Saviour should have expressed their gratitude thus, for the features of His apostles Paul and Peter, and indeed of Christ Himself, have been preserved in coloured portraits which I have examined. How could it be otherwise, when ancients habitually followed the own Gentile custom of honouring them as saviours in this uninhibited way? (7.18.2–4).[5]

In the *Acts of Pilate*, the woman is identified by name as Beronice/Veronica (Coptic/Latin, respectively). She testifies that Jesus healed her flow of blood, though the Jews retort that women may not give testimony according to their law (*Act. Pil.* 7).[6]

Moreover, numerous other figures in early church history displayed a tendency to allegorize the text such that the hemorrhaging woman was portrayed as representing the Gentile nations in contrast to Jairus and his daughter, who denote Israel, the law, and/or the synagogue.[7] For example, St. Hilary of Poitiers declares that

> This ruler [Jairus] is understood to be the Law, which was itself fostered by Christ and declared the expectation of his coming, and which now beseeches the Lord on behalf of the people to bring life back to the dead. . . . Thus the salvation has been brought for one while it is removed from another. The Lord praises her faith and perseverance

5. Eusebius *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, ed. Andrew Louth, trans. G. A Williamson (London: Folio, 2011), 212.

6. Schneemelcher, W., and R. M. Wilson, eds. *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1: *Gospels and Related Writings*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Clarke, 1991), 511.

7. See also, Zwiep, "Jairus, His Daughter and the Haemorrhaging Woman," 355; Gosbell, *The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame*, 241 n. 71.

> because what was prepared for Israel, the people of the Gentiles assumed (*Exp. Matt.* 9.6–7).[8]

Similarly, Ambrose of Milan supposes that "the assembly of the nations is like the woman who spent all her money on physicians. The assembly of the nations also lost all gifts of nature and squandered the inheritance of life" (*Exp. Luc.* 6:54–64).[9] Augustine suggested much the same interpretation, "that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue was a figure of the people of the Jews. . . . But the woman who suffered from the issue of blood, figured the church from among the Gentiles, to which Christ was not sent in his bodily presence" (*Serm.* 77.8).[10] Jerome's homily on Ps 106 likewise references the hemorrhaging woman as having, "spent all that she had on doctors; hungering and thirsting, her spirit died within her. But because she had lost everything that she possessed, because her life was wasting away within her, she—the Church gathered from the Gentiles—cried out to the Lord in anguish. Her touch on the hem of His garment was the cry of a believing heart."[11]

Finally, Peter Chrysologus posits that Jairus's daughter may be analogous to the synagogue, while the hemorrhaging woman is likened to the church among the nations: "Without doubt, she [Jairus's daughter] is the Syangogue. . . . But, while Christ was hastening to her, His Church which was located out among all the nations was suffering a hemorrhage and losing the blood of the human race" (*Coll. Serm.* 36.6).[12]

It would, of course, be a stretch to suggest that these allegorical readings of the hemorrhaging woman's healing immediately warrant the understanding that Luke (or Mark's) text points to the historical reality of her

8. St. Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. D. H. Williams, Fathers of the Church 125 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 106.

9. St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, *Exposition of the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke with Fragments on the Prophecy of Isaias*, trans. Theodosia Tomkinson (Etna: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998), 212.

10. St. Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount, Harmony of the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels*, ed. Philip Schaff, *NPNF*[1] 6 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 344.

11. St. Jerome, *The Homilies of St Jerome (1–59 on the Psalms)*, trans. Sister Marie Liguori Ewald Ewald, 2 vols., Fathers of the Church 48 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 1:241.

12. St. Peter Chrysologus, "Sermons," in *St Peter Chrysologus: Sermons; St Valerian: Homilies*, trans. George E. Ganss, Fathers of the Church 17 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 78–79. See also *Coll. Serm.* 33 in idem, *Selected Sermons*, trans. William B. Palardy, 2 vols., Fathers of the Church 109 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 2:140–43 for the wider context of Chrysologus's interpretation.

being a Gentile.[13] This being said, such interpretations taken together with the Eusebius's report on her veneration in Caesarea Philippi should at least give one pause to ask whether or not there may be a kernel of historical truth to be found in the tradition.[14] Indeed, a number of scholars have hinted at such a possibility.

For example, Wendy Cotter ponders whether Mark's predominantly Gentile audience would have been sensitive to Jewish purity issues or why the torah is not mentioned within the pericope (a point we return to below).[15] Elaine Wainwright (following Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt), observes that the woman's ethnicity is unknown,[16] while Joanna Dewey's comment that the woman "is not called a daughter of Abraham, a member of the Jewish people, but simply 'daughter,' a woman with a kinship relationship to Jesus," is highly suggestive.[17] Curiously, Edwards, while circumspect, seems open to the prospect of the woman's Gentile origin in his commentary on Mark, while in his more recent Luke commentary, he is more forthright, describing the tradition as "undoubtedly apocryphal."[18]

13. I acknowledge with Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee*, SNTSMS 118 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 174–82, that, though Jesus would have had contact with Gentiles, both in and around Galilee, these encounters were the minority. This being said, Luke's narrative encourages the expectation of some such encounters based on his report of Jesus's interaction with his own townspeople (4:16–30), in which he identifies Elijah and Elisha's ministering to Gentiles in Israel's past (cf. 1 Kgs 17:8–24; 2 Kgs 5:1–14).

14. Arthur McGiffert notes that the statue may have been erected in honor of Emperor Hadrian and been falsely interpreted (or positively appropriated [?]) by Christians due to the words σωτήρι or θεῷ being part of an associated inscription. He goes on to say that "There can be no doubt of Eusebius' honesty in the matter, but no less doubt that the statue commemorated something quite different from that which Christian tradition claimed." See, Eusebius, "The Church History of Eusebius," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Second Series) 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 304, n. 1 (second column).

15. Wendy Cotter, "Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles: The Healing of the Woman with the Hemorrhage and the Raising of Jairus's Daughter (Mark 5:21–43)," in *Feminist Companion to Mark*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 58.

16. Elaine M. Wainwright, *Women Healing/Healing Women: The Genderisation of Healing in Early Christianity* (London: Equinox, 2006), 117; cf. Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Legal Considerations in the Haemorrhaging Woman's Story, Mark 5:25–34," in *Transformative Encounters: Jesus and Women Re-viewed*, ed. Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 137–61.

17. Joanna Dewey, "Jesus' Healings of Women: Conformity and Nonconformity to Dominant Cultural Values as Clues for Historical Reconstruction," *BTB* 24.3 (1994): 127.

18. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 165 n. 41; idem, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 254 n. 158.

The question remains, therefore, about the trustworthiness of the tradition found in Eusebius. Granted, the Christian population of Philippi Caesarea may have attributed or appropriated the Hadrian statue as representing Jesus and the bleeding woman (see n. 14), but such a fact does not deny the possibility that believers held that tradition *before* there ever was a statue to which such a memory could be applied (per Bock's observation that the tradition may date as early as the second century).[19] Moreover, there is circumstantial evidence within Luke's Gospel that may indicate that this woman was a Gentile. If this is the case, Luke places a restored Gentile woman as a model of faith and discipleship for Jairus, Jesus's own disciples, not to mention the early church communities to whom Luke is writing.[20] As Willard Swartley has observed (in relation to the same story in Mark's Gospel), "the hemorrhaging woman emerges as the only clearly commended model [of faith and discipleship] in the entire first part of the Gospel, ending at 6:6a."[21] Such a narrative would have considerable social ramifications for Jew-Gentile relations in the early church. In what follows, I provide a synopsis of the immediate and wider context of the Lukan pericope that demonstrates Luke's concern for Gentile inclusion in Jesus's mission, thus paving the way to understanding the hemorrhaging woman to be a Gentile.

Immediate Context (Luke 8:40–56)

It is widely acknowledged that Mark 4:35–5:43 comprises a literary unit and Luke, it seems, saw fit to incorporate it in his own work (8:22–56).[22] Luke, of course, makes certain amendments and in the case of the hemorrhaging woman in 8:40–56, two of the most important for our purposes include (1) that Luke ties this event tightly to what preceded it (8:40), and (2) that Luke has Jesus himself express the fact that power has gone out from him (8:46), while in Mark, it is the narrator who reveals this to the recipients.[23]

19. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 786 n. 2, places the apocryphal source in the fifth century but adds that the tradition may have roots as far back as the second century.

20. Similarly, Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 165 n. 41.

21. Swartley, "The Role of Women in Mark's Gospel," 19.

22. E.g., Paul J. Achtemeier, "The Origin and Function of the Pre-Marcan Miracle Catenae," *JBL* 91.2 (1972): 198–221; Brower, "'Who Then Is This?'" 294; Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 261–62; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 242; Schnabel, *Mark*, 32, 112–30; Stein, *Mark*, vii, 239–77, although debate continues to surround how the unit came to be comprised as such. However, this is beyond the scope of this essay.

23. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 743–44; see also Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 786–87, who summarizes Fitzmyer's findings in point form.

Tying the quartet of miracles together is the language of fear and faith. For example, the disciples lack faith (πίστιν) and are full of fear (ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον) after witnessing Jesus calm the storm (8:25); the people of the Gerasenes display fear (ἐφοβήθησαν) upon encountering Jesus and the now-healed demoniac (8:35); the hemorrhaging woman trembles (τρέμουσα) when Jesus calls upon her (8:47);[24] Jesus subsequently praises the woman for her faith (πίστις) in coming to him for healing (8:48); and Jairus is exhorted, "Do not fear, only believe" (μὴ φοβοῦ, μόνον πίστευε) that his daughter will be made well (8:50).[25]

While we acknowledge Luke 8:40–56 retains Mark's original intercalation (or sandwich) technique, its literary association with the prior miracles of Jesus's calming the storm and healing the demoniac (Luke 8:22–39) encourages one to ask whether a broader pattern between the stories might also be found. To this end, I tentatively suggest the possibility that this quartet of miracles may be arranged in a thematic chiasm as follows:

A. Calming the Storm (8:22–25): A miracle for *Jewish* disciples in a *private* setting
    B. Healing the demoniac (8:26–39): A miracle for a *Gentile* in a *public* setting
    B′. Healing the bleeding woman (8:42b–48): A miracle for a *Gentile*(?) in a *public* setting
A′. Raising Jairus's daughter (8:40–42a, 49–56): A miracle for a *Jewish* person in a *private* setting

24. So, Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, KEK 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 107–8, for whom such a response "is a typical feature of an epiphany story" (es ift ein typifchet Zug einer Epiphaniegefchichte). Similarly, Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus (Teilbd. 1, Mk 1–8,26)*, EKKNT 2 (Zürich: Benziger; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 216, who observes that trembling is often a response to an encounter with God. See also, Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC 24 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 262, who notes that "For [Luke] fear was an appropriate response to the experience of God's presence" (Luke 1:12, 65; 2:9; 5:26; 7:16; 8:37; Acts 2:43; 5:5, 11; 16:29; 19:17).

25. While "faith" does not appear in the healing of the demoniac (5:1–20), the man's obedience to Jesus's command to "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (vv. 19–20, ESV), indicates that "faith" is present. In Mark's Gospel, faith is often displayed in obedience to Jesus's word. See, e.g., Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, 101: "he [the man with the withered hand, Mark 3:1–6] must take the risk of faith and act on the command of Jesus." See also p. 401: "The mark of faithfulness is watchfulness; not foretelling the future but *obedience* in the present" (emphasis added).

In short, this catena of miracles is bookended by those that occur for the benefit of Jews in relatively private settings: that is, the disciples are alone with Jesus on boat when the storm is calmed, and when Jairus's daughter is raised, only Peter, James, and John are permitted to witness the miracle with the family, as well as being sworn to secrecy about the event. Sandwiched between these two events are two rather more public displays of Jesus's power: one in Gentile territory in which the demoniac is encouraged to spread the good news of his healing, and the other, a (possibly Gentile) woman who receives healing in front of a throng of people before going "in peace." But while this is a suggestive structure, it cannot be taken for granted.

In order to develop this hypothesis further, one must take into account Luke's wider context. To this end, we first consider Luke's wider narrative context from the outset of Jesus's ministry, including his rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30), his healing a leper (Luke 5:12–16), and subsequent healing of a centurion's servant together with John the Baptist's associated response (Luke 7:1–10, 18–35). Following this, we consider some linguistic evidence from the sermon on the plain (Luke 6:17–49), the healing of the 10 lepers (Luke 17:11–19), and Jesus's salutation to the woman to "go in peace."

Luke's Wider Context

Jesus in Nazareth (4:16–30)

First, it is worth considering the polarized response of Nazareth early in Jesus's ministry. On this occasion, he reads from Isa 61 and affirms that the fulfillment of the passage is at hand. The initial response of Nazareth is positive: "they spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words coming from his mouth" (4:22).[26] What follows is a pendulum swing that ends in murderous rage (4:28–29). The catalyst for this turn in events is caused by Jesus himself, who anticipates their doubt ("Physician, heal yourself," 4:23a) and sense of privilege ("What we have heard you did in Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well," 4:23b).[27] Jesus unequivocally rejects this privilege by citing two miracles for the benefit of Gentiles by Elijah and Elisha, respectively (4:25–27).

Following Aaron Kuecker, the point of Jesus citing Elijah and Elisha is not to demonstrate God's rejection of Israel so much as to reveal that God's

26. All Bible quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless indicated otherwise.

27. Aaron J. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other": Social Identity, Ethnicity and Intergroup Reconciliation in Luke–Acts*, LNTS 444 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 83.

salvific purposes extend beyond Israel's borders to the Gentiles. Moreover, it is the prophets that will be the ones to execute this ministry even if it challenges privileged Israelite (or in this case, Nazarene) identity.[28] Thus, while Jesus sees his ministry as primarily to Israel, Gentiles are also in the picture from the beginning. This fact enrages Jesus's townsfolk to the point of wanting to kill him. From Luke's narrative perspective, therefore, one should not be surprised when Jesus encounters Gentiles who display faith and/or are the beneficiaries of his ministry. The next example in our endeavor to determine the identity of the hemorrhaging woman is, counterintuitively, not another Gentile but a Jewish leper.

Jesus Heals a Leper (5:12–16)

It is not clear initially why Jesus's healing of the leper is crucial to our understanding of the hemorrhaging woman. On closer inspection, however, information presented here (and not presented in the case of the hemorrhaging woman) proves vital to our thesis. The key to the passage is what the leper is instructed to do after having been healed; namely, the instructions are to "go and show [himself] to the priest, and make an offering for [his] cleansing, as Moses commanded, for proof to them" (5:14). In this case, Jesus is referring to Lev 14:2–32 and the laws concerning the cleansing of skin diseases. The list is extensive, including specific sacrifices, rituals, and provisions for lepers who happen to be poor. All of this presumes that the man is Jewish and thus obliged to follow the Law of Moses.

However, when Jesus heals the hemorrhaging woman in 8:42b–48, no such instruction is given. While granted this is an argument from silence, one might call it a deafening silence because, just as there was a purification rite for the Jewish leper, so too was there a purification rite for a Jewish woman who suffered from such an extended hemorrhage as did this woman. The key verses are in Lev 15:25–31:

> [25] If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. [26] Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. [27] And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and

28. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other"*, 93–94.

> bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. [28] But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. [29] And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. [30] And the priest shall use one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord for her unclean discharge.
>
> [31] Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.

Given that only three chapters earlier, Jesus commanded a leper to show himself to a priest in order to be pronounced clean and so uphold the law, it would be truly remarkable for Jesus not to give the equivalent counsel if this woman was also a Jew. Yet surprisingly few commentators pick up on this reality. One who does is David Garland, who notes in his commentary on Mark that "a woman who suffered her affliction was supposed to bring a sacrifice in the temple when she was healed (Lev. 15:29–30), but Jesus makes no mention of this as he did for the leper (Mark 1:44 [cf. Luke 5:12–16]). Someone with a hemorrhage did not have to go through the same public procedure before he or she could be reintegrated into society".[29]

It is difficult to discern what to make of Garland's comments. On the one hand our hemorrhaging woman is "supposed to bring a sacrifice"; on the other hand, she "did not have to go through the same public procedure." Which is it? It hardly helps to say that she is "supposed to" do something, if actually, she "did not have to" do something. Ross Shepard Kraemer posits that Galilean women—presumably given their lack of proximity to the Jerusalem temple—may have felt less bound to Levitical menstrual regulations,[30] but as Dewey points out, the wider culture tends to incorporate the values of the dominant group. Hence, if our supplicant is Jewish, she would have certainly considered herself to be unclean, as would others.[31] The more important question to ask, however, is what a rabbi would make of such an ailment and its cleansing. Given that Rabbi Jesus has already shown himself to be one whom, where possible, follows cultic regulations as in the case of the

29. Garland, *Mark*, 221 n. 10.

30. Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 99–105, 125–26, 143; cited by Dewey, "Jesus' Healings of Women," 127.

31. Ibid.

cleansed leper, it would be highly incongruous that he should now do the exact opposite with regard to the hemorrhaging woman.[32] Indeed, after extended discussion, Louise Gosbell concludes similarly that purity remained a legitimate concern among some Jewish groups including those who had no direct connection with the temple. Moreover, she suggests that to dismiss the purity concerns ignores linguistic parallels between the Markan text (from which Luke borrows) and Leviticus.[33]

The repercussions of these circumstances are not trivial. Given the nature of the woman's ailment, if she is in fact Jewish, Jesus is clearly seen to be subverting the institution of the temple by virtue of pronouncing her healed and not needing to offer the relevant sacrifice.[34] But if she is a Gentile, what we have is the extension of God's grace beyond the borders of Israel, just as Jesus implied in Luke 4:16–30, thus presenting an astonishing model of faith for the Jewish synagogue leader, Jairus, and of course, the recipients

32. Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah: Was Jesus Indifferent to Impurity?* ConBNT 38 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 136, follows Loader (n. 263), in suggesting a level of potential "foreboding" among Mark's (and presumably Luke's) recipients with regard to menstruant women as the reason for not explaining Jewish practices that concerned the matter of her healing. One wonders if this is an adequate explanation, since there is nothing particularly squeamish about honoring the Levitical code in relation to her healing, should Jesus have given such a command.

33. Gosbell, *The Poor, the Crippled, the Blind, and the Lame*, 249 (for the full discussion, see pp. 243–49).

34. This has to be acknowledged as a possibility, given that Jesus has already offered forgiveness apart from the temple institution in his healing of the paralytic earlier in the narrative (Luke 5:17–26; par. Mark 2:1–12). See also, Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel*, 52–53; following Selvidge, "Mark 5 and Leviticus 15"; and Hisako Kinukawa, *Women and Jesus in Mark: A Japanese Feminist Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 44–45; cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1983), 124. Monika Fander, *Die Stellung der Frau im Markusevangelium: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung kultur- und religionsgeschichtlicher Hintergründe*, Münsteraner Theologische Abhandlungen 8 (Altenberge: Telos, 1989), 54–55, argues that the absence of purity concerns in the text suggests that the Markan community has abandoned or rejected such norms; cf. Brigitte Kahl, "Jairus und die verlorenen Töchter Israels: Sozioliterarische Überlegungen zum Problem der Grenzüberschreitung in Mk 5,21–43," in *Von der Wurzel getragen: Christlich-feministische Exegese in Auseinandersetzung mit Antijudaismus*, ed. Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker, BibInt 17 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 61–78, who suggests that purity concerns are largely absent from the text. See further Fonrobert, "The Woman with a Blood-Flow," 133; and Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 936, who argue from Lev 15 and mishnaic authority that touching per se was not necessarily prohibited. If so, purity laws need not be in view here. On either reading, it is still significant that Jesus does not instruct the woman to offer the relevant sacrifices given his instructions to a leper earlier in his ministry.

of Luke's Gospel.[35] Again, while this evidence is suggestive, it is an argument from silence, so one must look further for clues that may bring us to a conclusion regarding this woman's identity. To this end, I next investigate Jesus's healing of a centurion's servant and the related response of John the Baptist (7:1–10, 18–35).

The Healing of a Centurion's Servant (7:1–10, 18–35)

The healing of the centurion's servant is significant because it is the first miracle that involves a specific Gentile person (as opposed to Gentiles among the crowds in the previous section), thus preparing the reader for likelihood of more individualized Gentile healing encounters (e.g., the demoniac in 8:26–39). Just as Jesus praises the faith of the bleeding woman in 8:48, so too here he praises the faith of the centurion (7:9). More curious is the response of John the Baptist, who seems to have trouble digesting the news that Jesus would heal the servant of a centurion who stands as a representative of Israel's oppression; hence John's question, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" His question is likely prompted by the fact that Jesus has thus far received mixed reviews at best and has also dispensed miracles for Gentiles.[36] In response to John, Jesus affirms that he is indeed the one who is to come, his reply echoing his earlier comments in Nazareth (4:18–19), before adding the cryptic beatitude "And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

What would give John offense? Presumably, the fact that a miracle has been discharged to a pagan oppressor of Israel, while John himself, the greatest man born of a woman (7:26), is rotting in jail. Moreover, Jesus would heal many people during his ministry, Gentiles included, but for the faithful Baptist, no such miracle would come his way. Hence Jesus's exhortation, "Blessed is the one who not offended by me." As Joel Green notes, the blessed are those "who are willing to undergo a conversion of their views of God's purpose, the inbreaking eschatological salvation, and, so, of Jesus' mission."[37] The context suggests that the extension of God's salvific purposes to the Gentiles within Jesus's lifetime was a reality at which even John the Baptist may have balked, though as Jesus goes on to say, "wisdom is proved right by *all* her children" (7:35 NIV, emphasis added). These particular verses thus present another instance of surprising Gentile inclusion that may prepare the reader for the hemorrhaging woman's model of faith.

35. Swartley, "The Role of Women in Mark's Gospel," 19. Following Garland, *Luke*, 367, it is also important to note that Gentiles of the Greco-Roman world would have also been ill-at-ease with a woman in such a condition (e.g., Pliny, *Nat.* 7.64).

36. Green, *Luke*, 295–96.

37. Ibid., 297.

Lukan Linguistic Evidence

Two linguistic parallels warrant mentioning as potential evidence that points in the direction of the hemorrhaging woman being a Gentile. The first appears in the Luke 6, where Luke recounts the Sermon on the Plain; the second occurs in the story of Jesus healing ten lepers. Their significance lies in that, in both cases, the language echoes that of the healing of the bleeding woman and that, in both cases, non-Jewish people play a significant role in the narrative. Following this, we shall consider Jesus's salutation to the woman after her healing to "Go in peace."

The Sermon on the Plain (6:17–19)

A brief comment will suffice here. While the presumption of many is that our hemorrhaging woman is Jewish because the miracle occurs upon Jesus's return to Capernaum, it should be noted that Jesus's ministry was already influencing Gentiles in the surrounding regions and that they would gather with the Jews to encounter him. Luke mentions that scores of people came to hear Jesus and to be healed by him from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and *the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon* (6:17).[38] Interestingly, Luke does not differentiate between the Jews and the Gentiles during this encounter. Verse 19 is particularly instructive in that it says "*all* the crowd [i.e., Jew and Gentile alike], sought to touch him, for *power came out from him* and healed them all." Such language foreshadows the same *power coming out from Jesus* as when he healed the hemorrhaging woman (8:46), as table 1 demonstrates.

The Healing of Ten Lepers (17:11–19)

Once again, we need only be brief here. On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus is confronted by ten lepers who beg for healing mercy. Jesus obliges and,

TABLE 1 | A Comparison of Luke 6:19 with Luke 8: 46

Luke 6:19	*Luke 8:46*
καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἐζήτουν ἅπτεσθαι αὐτοῦ, ὅτι δύναμις παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξήρχετο καὶ ἰᾶτο πάντας.	ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἥψατό μού τις, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔγνων δύναμιν ἐξεληλυθυῖαν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.
all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all	But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me."

38. One wonders how Jesus's message of loving one's enemies (6:27–36) would have been received here, with residents of Tyre and Sidon mingling among the Jews and perhaps making occasional eye contact with one another.

TABLE 2 | A Comparison of Luke 17:19 with Luke 8:48

Luke 17:19	*Luke 8:48*
καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἀναστὰς *πορεύου*· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε.	ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· *πορεύου* εἰς εἰρήνην.
And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."	And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

similarly to his healing of the leper (ch. 5), urges them to show themselves to the priests. In the aftermath, only one returns to give thanks (vv. 15–16). This one turns out to be a Samaritan to whom Jesus refers as a *foreigner* (v. 18). More appealing for our purpose is Jesus's final words of dismissal that echo his earlier words spoken to our bleeding woman, "your faith has made you well" (v. 19; cf. 8:48; see table 2).[39]

Frederick Gaiser also observes this parallel language in two other instances: a female "sinner" who washes Jesus's feet (7:50) and blind Bartimaeus (18:42). If we are correct in believing that the woman is a Gentile, Luke's use of "your faith has made you well" appears to be applied equally to Jews and Gentiles alike. This is perhaps what one might expect given that Jesus anticipated his ministry to Gentiles at the outset (4:16–30). The parallel language here taken together with the aforementioned *power going out* from Jesus from the sermon on the plain suggests that our hemorrhaging woman might likewise be understood as a Gentile.

"Go in Peace" (8:48)

Finally, we consider Jesus's concluding remarks to the woman, namely, to "go in peace."[40] As Darrell Bock notes, peace is a key theme associated with Jesus's ministry; moreover, it is not a feeling so much as a reality that now exists between the woman and God on the basis of her faith.[41] It

39. See Maureen W. Yeung, *Faith in Jesus and Paul: A Comparison with Special Reference to "Faith That Can Remove Mountains" and "Your Faith Has Healed/Saved You,"* WUNT 2/147 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 176–77, who observes that Jesus's statement "your faith has made you well" stands as an unprecedented saying and suggests that it carries "a certain authority that is absent in Jewish healing miracles of Jesus' day." Consequently, Yeung argues that it should be understood as conveying not merely healing but also God's acceptance of her, that is, that her ailment was not God's judgment on her life.

40. For Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 339, these final words, and not the miracle itself, are the climax of the whole episode.

41. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 799; similarly, Craig A. Evans, "'Who Touched Me?' Jesus and the Ritually Impure," in *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, AGJU 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 368, who observes that the

is well-known that "Go in peace" is a Hebrew blessing,[42] but something more may be in play. Luke's use of *peace*, particularly early in Luke, is often found in connection with the gospel extending to Gentiles. So, for example, Zechariah's song concludes with "*to give light to those who sit in darkness* and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of *peace* (εἰρήνης)" (Luke 1:79, emphasis added); the song of the angels states, "Glory to God in the highest, *and on earth peace* (εἰρήνη) *among those with whom he is pleased*"(Luke 2:14, emphasis added to note the lack of ethnic distinction); and finally, Simeon's blessing (Luke 2:29–32, again emphasis added):

> Lord, now you are letting your servant *depart in peace* (εἰρήνῃ),
> according to your word;
> *for my eyes have seen your salvation*
> *that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,*
> *a light for revelation to the Gentiles,*
> and for glory to your people Israel

Because it is perhaps not immediately discernable, some elaboration is warranted particularly for our understanding of Zechariah's Benedictus and Simeon's prayer at this point. The most compelling case for understanding "those who sit in darkness" as referring to Gentiles has been provided by Aaron Kuecker. While acknowledging that interpreters have often regarded Luke 1:76–79 as referring to internal Israelite salvation, Kuecker argues that the passage must be seen as more universally oriented: "at the very least Luke thinks *both* Israelites and non-Israelites (if not non-Israelites alone) sit in darkness and the shadow of death."[43] To make his case, Kuecker provides two pieces of evidence. First, he observes that the role of the Servant in Isa 49:6–10 LXX is to bring together both the tribes of Jacob and bring light to the ἔθνη, thus bringing salvation to the ends of the earth.

> καὶ εἶπέν μοι Μέγα σοί ἐστιν τοῦ κληθῆναί σε παῖδά μου τοῦ στῆσαι
> τὰς φυλὰς Ιακωβ καὶ τὴν διασπορὰν τοῦ Ισραηλ ἐπιστρέψαι· ἰδοὺ

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woman is free to go "in a state of wholeness and restoration"; so also Wainwright, *Women Healing/Healing Women*, 119, who highlights that σῴζω often has the nuance of not merely being healed but also being restored to right relationship with God, people, and the material world (which I discuss further below).

42. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 256 n. 168; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, AB 27 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 361.

43. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other,"* 62–63.

> τέθεικά σε εἰς διαθήκην γένους εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναί σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.
>
> And he said to me, "It is a great thing for you to be called my servant so that you may set up the tribes of Iakob and turn back the dispersion of Israel. See, I have made you a light of nations, that you may be for salvation to the end of the earth." (Isa 49:6 LXX/NETS)

Such language from Isaiah, Kuecker notes, is also tied to Lukan usage in Acts 1:8 and 13:47. In addition, the light/darkness imagery at play in Isa 49:8–9 shows Gentiles in need of light, thus making it a likely source for his usage in 1:79.[44]

Drawing on the work of Goldingay and Payne, Kuecker demonstrates further connections between Luke and Isaiah; in particular, Isa 42 LXX, which speaks of God's Servant being given as "a covenant to the people (γένους), a light to the ἔθνη, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness" (Isa 42:6–7), while Isa 42:9 speaks of God's work as "dawning" or "rising up" (ἀνατεῖλαι), which Luke may himself draw on: "because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise (ἀνατολὴ) shall visit us from on high" (1:78).[45] For Kuecker, then, the LXX provides Luke a foundation on which the use of light/darkness may be used to describe non-Israelites as being in darkness. This leads to Kuecker's second point, made more briefly, that "Luke's own usage of light/darkness imagery *always* includes non-Israelites as part of its referent" (see Acts 13:47 [quoting Isa 49:6]; 26:16–18, 22–23).[46]

All of this brings us now to Simeon's words when Jesus is presented to him at the Temple. For Simeon, to see Jesus is to see φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ ("a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel"). Together, then, the cumulative evidence from the LXX, alongside Luke's own usage of light/darkness imagery and the proximity of Simeon's words to Zechariah's Benedictus leads Kuecker to conclude, rightly in my opinion, that 1:79a refers to Gentiles as those in darkness being brought back into peaceful relationship with God.[47]

44. Ibid., 63–64.

45. Ibid., 64; cf. John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, vol. 1, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 227, 230.

46. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other"*, 63, 65 (emphasis original).

47. While it is true that it is Simeon who departs *in peace,* what is notable is the reason given for that peace: that his eyes have seen the provision of Lord's salvation for both Jews *and Gentiles* alike, thus preparing the reader for examples of such salvation (i.e., *peace* and

Kuecker notes further that of Luke's 21 uses of *peace*, the word is used in one of two ways: as greeting/salutation or in order to describe the state that results from reconciliation.[48] Given our argument thus far, it may not be a stretch to suggest that Jesus's blessing of the hemorrhaging woman falls into both categories. Supporting this proposition is the language Luke (borrowing from Mark) uses concerning the restoration of the woman. As observed by Gaiser, Mark differentiates between healing (ἰάομαι, Mark 5:29) and being saved/made well (σῴζω, Mark 5:28, 34).[49] Luke makes a similar distinction, with the woman referring to her "healing" in 8:47 and Jesus declaring her "saved/made well" in 8:48. The distinction is important and is the reason that Jesus stops in his tracks. As Green well notes, "though her physical problem may be cured, she is not yet healed."[50] Jesus, it seems, wants more than just a healing (ἰάομαι); he wants her to be "made well," that is, saved (σῴζω).[51]

Much has been made of whether or not Jesus knew who touched him or what exactly had happened.[52] Regardless of what Jesus did or did not know, he stopped, not for his benefit, but for hers. Presumably, this woman could have escaped notice. She could have walked away "healed" (ἰάομαι) but not "saved/made well" (σῴζω). Had she done so, she would have remained an outsider, her trauma lingering on. It so happens that she remains and Jesus stops. The stage is set for a very private and intimate miracle to become a very public encounter that presents as an act of mutual witness, as affirmed by Ephrem the Syrian:

> Glory to you, hidden offspring of Being, because the hidden suffering of her that was afflicted proclaimed your healing. Using a woman

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reconciliation between God and Gentiles) later in Luke's narrative (a point affirmed again in Luke 4:16–30, cited earlier).

48. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other"*, 66.

49. Frederick J. Gaiser, "In Touch with Jesus: Healing in Mark 5:21–43," *WW* 30.1 (2010): 8.

50. Green, *Luke*, 347. Green goes on to suggest that limiting the encounter to biomedical definitions does not do justice to the text. The woman's greater problem is social and religious, and until these latter issues are addressed, she cannot be considered "well" or "saved" in any meaningful sense (see n. 103).

51. Contra, Cotter, "Mark's Hero of the Twelfth-Year Miracles," 59, who sees Jesus's command to "go and be healed of your disease" (Luke 8:48; cf. Mark 5:34) as a secondary inclusion because she was healed earlier (Luke 8:44; cf. Mark 5:29), thus rendering Jesus's words redundant. But see I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), 95, who is likely correct in pointing out the connection between physical healings and spiritual salvation when he observes that "common to both sets of activity is the power of God revealed in Jesus in response to faith."

52. See, for instance, Shelly Rambo, "Trauma and Faith: Reading the Narrative of the Hemorrhaging Woman," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 13.2 (2010): 245–48.

> whom they could see, he enabled them to see the divinity that cannot be seen. The Son's divinity became known through his healing, and the afflicted woman's faith was revealed through her being healed. She caused him to be proclaimed, and she was proclaimed with him. Truth was being proclaimed together with its heralds. If she was a witness to his divinity, he in turn was a witness to her faith.[53]

The result for the woman is not just physical healing but wholeness, peace, *shalom* that encompasses her whole person.[54] Shelly Rambo is correct to point out, however, that this is not an end but a beginning. After 12 years of physical and social disintegration, this woman must come to know her own restored body again, as well as the community from which she was isolated for so long.[55] She has been given a clean slate because of her willingness to remain and testify and, equally, because of Jesus's willingness to stop and act as witness so that the encounter could unfold. As Grundmann aptly noted, "the anonymous withdrawal of power has become a personal encounter."[56] Moreover, her public testimony parallels that of the Gentile demoniac from earlier in the chapter.

To summarize, Luke's differentiating between the woman's "healing" and her being "made well/saved," together with Jesus's salutation of "peace," may specify an enactment of what was suggested earlier, namely, that Jesus's ministry will extend salvation to the Gentiles. Moreover, this woman becomes an unlikely witness to the power of faith for the benefit of Luke's recipients and, within the narrative itself, the Jewish synagogue leader, Jairus, who will subsequently lose and regain his daughter in the latter half of the narrative.

53. Carmel McCarthy, ed., *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709 with Introduction and Notes*, trans. Carmel McCarthy, Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 129; see also Rambo, "Trauma and Faith," 245–48.

54. See again Wainwright, *Women Healing/Healing Women*, 119, 121–22.

55. Cohen, "Menstruants and the Sacred," 275, argues that there is nothing in the text to suggest that the woman experienced any social isolation as a result of her ailment; however, Wainwright, *Women Healing/Healing Women*, 117, tellingly observes that the woman "enters and leaves the narrative alone, a woman without familial connections that is quite extraordinary in the world of Jew, Roman or Greek of the first century."; similarly, Kahl, "Jairus und die verlorenen Töchter Israels," 69.

Her restored body: Rambo, "Trauma and Faith," 249.

Her community: Green, *Luke*, 349.

56. Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 2 (Berlin: Evangelische, 1968), 115. In the German, "Aus dem anonymen Kraftentzug ist eine personhafte Begegnung geworden."

Potential Implications

If my hypothesis is correct, that this woman is indeed a Gentile, there would be numerous implications. Here we pick up on two: first, if this woman is a Gentile, she exposes the superficiality of what one normally expects of a model disciple. Consider her status in relation to Jairus in table 3.[57] Cultural norms suggest that Jairus should be the one to be presented as the exemplar within a faith community. And yet Luke presents us an anonymous Gentile woman—a trauma victim on account of a debilitating and extended illness through no fault of her own, an outsider in relation to the world—and places her in a position of honor.[58] What she models as prototypical for Jairus and the wider church community (in all its multiethnic struggles and glories), is faith, courage, and humility.[59] Though her outer appearance may be un-Jewish, not to mention roughshod as a result of her ailment, it is her inner character that is exemplary and dazzles those with eyes of faith to see her as Jesus does and as Jairus and the church community is effectively called to do.[60]

TABLE 3 | A Comparison of Jairus and the Hemorrhaging Woman

Jairus	*Hemorrhaging Woman*
synagogue ruler	anonymous
male	female
approaches Jesus directly	approaches Jesus indirectly
ritually clean	ritually unclean
insider in relation to the community	outsider in relation to the community
Jewish	Gentile(?)

57. Brower, "'Who Then Is This?'" 303.

58. It has been observed that the name *Jairus* means "God enlightens." So, e.g., Grundmann, *Markus*, 114; cf. Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 337 n. 32; Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, 253 n. 154. Edwards notes the importance of named witnesses, and in this instance may indicate that Jairus may have become a member of the faith community; following, Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 39–66. See especially Bauckham's brief overview of the discussion surrounding the omission of the name *Jairus* from D and five old Latin manuscripts (p. 41). Either way, it is no small irony that Jairus, the one whom "God enlightens," should find himself in the position of being "enlightened" concerning the power of faith by a hemorrhaging woman who may be a Gentile.

59. Again, see Swartley, "The Role of Women in Mark's Gospel," 19.

60. Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 335, argues that the account functions sociologically by highlighting Jesus's acceptance of both the bleeding woman and Jairus's daughter and, by extension, their acceptance into the early Christian community.

The second implication of my hypothesis is that the unity of the church will not be dependent on racial uniformity. If Jesus extends his teaching and healing ministry to Gentiles and demonstrably welcomes them into God's kingdom during an extended time of teaching (the sermon on the plain), or by healing a centurion's servant, or by healing a Gentile woman with a debilitating hematological condition, then the church ought not shut its doors to perceived outsiders. According to Kuecker, this means that the church takes on an "allocentric" outlook, that is, it is focused precisely on the so-called other or outsider.[61] Such a fellowship can only be born of the Spirit and is "nothing less than a *different way of being human in community*."[62] What will ultimately bind the church in unity is not race or ethnicity but faith in Jesus that is manifest through the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The thrust of this article has sought to establish that there are good reasons for believing that the hemorrhaging woman in Luke 8 may be a Gentile and, if so, what the consequences of such a reality might be. I began with pericope's immediate context, considering the miracle in relation to the three others surrounding it. Here, I suggested a chiastic model showing that the four miracles (Jesus calming the storm, healing a demoniac, healing the hemorrhaging woman, and raising Jairus's daughter) form an ABB′A′ pattern with private miracles for Jews (A, A′) and public miracles for Gentiles (B, B′). Widening the scope, Jesus's ministry in Nazareth was examined, followed by his healing of a Jewish leper and the healing of a centurion's servant. In three of these instances it was shown that Gentiles were clearly recipients of Jesus's ministry from early on. Also suggestive were the linguistic parallels, identified in Jesus's sermon on the plain (*power* going out from Jesus) and the healing of the ten lepers ("your faith has made you well") that echo Jesus's own words to the hemorrhaging woman. Finally, we considered the language of "peace" which, early in Luke, strongly suggests that the Gentiles would be recipients of peace through Jesus's ministry. Thus, his salutation to the now healed woman to "go in peace," taken together with Luke's differentiated language of healing and being "made well," may also suggest that the she be understood as being Gentile.

On the basis of the aforementioned evidence, it is reasonable to suggest that the hemorrhaging woman may indeed be a Gentile. To my mind, the

61. Kuecker, *The Spirit and the "Other"*, 48–49.
62. Ibid., 134, emphasis original.

most significant piece of evidence in favor of such a conclusion is the healing of the Jewish leper. As was said earlier, it seems incongruous that Jesus's instructions to honor the Levitical law (Lev 14) in relation to the leper were conspicuously absent from his encounter with the hemorrhaging woman. If the woman was Jewish, one would have to explain why Jesus did not give similar counsel in light of the directives in Lev 15.

The result of all this for Luke's readers (both ancient and modern) is that our paragons of faith are not necessarily what we expect. If we are correct in our hypothesis, Luke presents an unlikely and surprising candidate as a model of faith for *all* who would follow Christ: she is a destitute Gentile woman with an ailment that would render her an outsider in any context. Luke (and Mark), however, place her in a position of honor on account of her faith. In a modern setting, the exemplars one looks toward should not always be those on stage and in positions of leadership (though ideally, these people ought to be this sort of models). Rather, one should be looking for those who, in spite of all appearances and circumstances, testify to the goodness of Jesus in the daily and sometimes ongoing trauma of life, who can say like Job, "though he slay me, yet I will hope in him" (Job 13:15).