Luke 9:51-56—A Hebrew Fragment

36-46 minutes

by David Flusser[*]

When Judea was under Roman rule, the Galileans would pass through the territory of the Samaritans as they made pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem for their festivals. It once happened during the governorship of Cumanus (48-52 C.E.) that one Galilean from among the large number of Jews who went up to the festival was killed by the Samaritans. This took place near a village in the great plain of Samaria, which was then called Gema and is now called Jenin.[1] The motive for the murder was ideological hatred, which provoked revenge and massacre by the Jews, which in turn led to a Roman intervention and yet more slaughter. In Rome the matter became a political scandal and in the end the governor Cumanus was sent into exile and another, the notorious Marcus Antonius Felix, launched his career in Judah.

It is not difficult to imagine why the Galilean pilgrim met his death at the hands of the Samaritans, although we do not know the exact circumstances. The Samaritans probably regarded the constant passage of Jewish pilgrims from Galilee to Jerusalem through their territory as a deliberate provocation intended as an affront to their religious feelings. Great numbers of Galileans were going to the

unholy, lavish temple in Jerusalem, when in the Samaritans' view the true holy place was Mount Gerizim! Why, then, did these Galileans have to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, not far from the truly sacred mountain? So the Samaritans banded together. We do not know whether they wanted to physically hinder the crowd of Galilean pilgrims or whether they simply stood by menacingly [166] as the pilgrims passed. At any rate, we can imagine that the Galileans were outraged on their part. Perhaps some of them wished that God would rain down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans. In such a charged atmosphere there was a confrontation—and a Galilean was killed. The time when true worshipers would worship the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:23) had yet to be realized.

About twenty years earlier, another group of pilgrims, Galilean men and women, traveled the same route to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-56) to sacrifice in the Temple for the Passover and to celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread. Jesus, the leader of this group of pilgrims, sent messengers into a Samaritan village to find lodging for the pilgrims, but the Samaritans did not receive him because he was headed in the direction of Jerusalem.[2] Whether the Samaritans openly stated the reason for refusing him, or whether they offered some flimsy excuse as to why their village had no place for the Galileans, we do not know. Nevertheless, it was clear to these Galileans that the Samaritan villagers would not receive them because they were on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Two of the pilgrims were so incensed at the Samaritans' insult to the Temple in Jerusalem and to the Jewish people that they approached Jesus to ask that fire be brought down on the village.[3] But Jesus scolded these hotheads and they went on to another Jewish[4]

village.

[167] In the Gospel account the reason for the Samaritan refusal is clearly stated: they did not receive Jesus because he was traveling in the direction of Jerusalem. As we have seen, the reaction of the Samaritans is historically understandable and, therefore, there is no reason to doubt the historicity of the incident. But what about the transmission of the story itself? We will not concern ourselves here with the position of the fragment in Luke or with its function in Luke's Gospel. It is sufficient for our purpose to recognize that the author of Luke did not invent the incident; he copied it from a written source, and in that source verses 51-53 at least had been translated verbatim from Hebrew into Greek.

We have seen that the whole passage deals with Jesus' and the disciples' pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But in Luke the story begins like this: "Now it came to pass, when the days of his ascension were fulfilled, that he set his face to Jerusalem, in order to travel there" (Luke 9:51). The Greek word for ascension, ἀνάλημψις (*analēmpsis*), which is not otherwise found in the New Testament or in the Greek Scriptures, corresponds to the Latin *assumptio*. It means "ascension" here and not simply "death," although such an understanding would be linguistically possible.[5] It was Professor Bo Reicke who correctly guessed that behind the Greek word for ascension there was a Hebrew word for pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[6] The Hebrew word he sought is undoubtedly עֲלִיָּה (*ʿaliyāh*). This term does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures;[7] it is post-biblical and means, among other things, the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[8] That this Hebrew word is the [168] only equivalent for the word "ascension" in Luke 9:51 is clear. In other words, the

Greek translator of our passage rendered the word עֲלִיָה incorrectly: instead of "pilgrimage" he wrote "ascension." Thus, the passage originally began: "Now it came to pass, when the days of his pilgrimage were fulfilled, that he set his face to Jerusalem, to journey there". The translator, who confused the two meanings of the Hebrew word, could hardly have been the author of Luke, for the author of Luke did not know Hebrew. In the course of our investigation we will become better acquainted with this Greek translator.

It is still possible to recognize the Hebraisms in the Greek translation, and scholars have long since made note of them. Among these is the triple mention of Jesus' "face" (Luke 9:51, 52, 53), about which we shall have more to say later. It has also been recognized that the phrase "when the days were completed" has many parallels in the Hebrew Scriptures.[9] But as far as I know, the fact that the phrase "and he sent messengers before him" (Luke 9:52) was taken from the stories of Jacob in Genesis (Gen. 32:4) has not been noticed hitherto. As we shall see, this allusion depends on the Hebrew text of Genesis and not on the Septuagint's Greek translation. But even these features are not sufficient to prove that our passage was not written in Septuagint Greek, but that its original was Hebrew. But in fact the historical narrative in Luke 9:51-53 was translated verbatim from Hebrew[10]—the dialogue (Luke 9:54-55), on the other hand, is either a freer translation or it was [169] restyled to a certain extent by a Greek editor.[11] This can best be shown by means of back translation (i.e., retroversion to Hebrew):

ויהי במלאות ימי עליתו, וישם פניו ללכת לירושלים וישלח מלאכים לפניו, וילכו

ויבאו בכפר השמרונים כדי להכין לו ולא קבלו אותו כי פניו אל ירושלם.

The reconstruction of the Hebrew text is so secure that I venture to translate it verbatim into English:

(51) And it was when the days of his pilgrimage were completed, that he set his face to go to Jerusalem, (52) and he sent messengers before his face, and they went and came to a village of the Samaritans in order to prepare for him. (53) And they did not receive him, because his face was toward Jerusalem.

That it was still possible in the time of Jesus to write historical prose in Biblical Hebrew style is certainly not surprising. Leaving aside the deliberately archaic and artificial biblicizing style of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is the Hebrew portion of the Book of Daniel from the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and the story of the quarrel between Alexander Jannaeus and the Pharisees narrated in the Babylonian Talmud (b. Kid. 66a), [11a] which comes from a written Hebrew source composed in biblicizing style. So there is no reason why a fragment of the Hebrew account about Jesus should not have stood in the stylistic tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures. That this was the case is proven definitively by our fragment, the Hebrew original of which was not written in Mishnaic Hebrew but in the style of Biblical Hebrew. [11b]

In this very short text, both in Hebrew and in the Greek translation that has survived, the word "face" occurs three times. All three cases are Hebraisms preserved by the Greek translator. The first (Luke 9:51) and third (Luke 9:53) are actually about the same thing: 1) when Jesus started his pilgrimage, "he set his face to go to Jerusalem," that is, he decided to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and began to head in that direction; 3) the Samaritans

did not receive him "because his face was toward Jerusalem," [170] that is, because he was heading in the direction of Jerusalem. In both cases, the translator found it difficult to translate freely without sacrificing the conciseness of the Hebrew idiom—but in both cases, was a desire for extraordinary fidelity the real reason he translated the Hebrew idiom literally?

Otherwise the Greek translators in the Synoptic Gospels did not usually translate in the manner of Buber or Aquila. Therefore, the word "face" was probably important to the translator for some reason, and he became sensitized to this word because it occurs three times in this short passage. The second occurrence of the word "face" in our passage, which we have not yet been mentioned, serves to prove this surmise: "And he sent messengers before his face" (Luke 9:52). As I already noted, these words are taken from Gen. 32:4, and there, as in the new context in Luke, the word "face" does not have the same concise directional sense as it does in Luke 9:51 and 9:53. Here the text simply wants to say that Jesus sent messengers "before him"—and that is how the Septuagint translators rendered Gen. 32:4 without retaining the word "face" (ἀπέστειλεν δὲ Ιακωβ ἀγγέλους ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ["But Jacob sent messengers ahead of him…"). But not so the New Testament translator: here, as in the other two cases, he did not want to forego the word "face" in Greek.

Evidently, the translator was struck by the triple occurrence "face" in his Hebrew text and suspected that this word, repeated so often, was somehow significant. Since he considered the whole passage to be important because of its presumed religious content he translated the sentences strictly verbatim from Hebrew into Greek.

This is fortunate for us: we are able to discern that in this passage the original was composed in Biblical Hebrew. We also saw that the Greek translator mistakenly translated the Hebrew word עֲלִיָּה as "ascension" instead of "pilgrimage." Was he led into this error because he suspected that behind the threefold "face" there was a christological message that fit with the ascension of Christ? If so, then what I once said on a previous occasion also applies to this text: "The tradents and the evangelists usually woke up only for a moment, and almost always it was at the wrong moment."**[12]**

[171] What was the christological message the Greek translator suspected lay behind our passage? We can know more about this by examining the Greek translation of the third "face" in Luke 9:53. Originally, in Hebrew it said: כי פניו אל ירושלם ("because his face was [directed] towards Jerusalem") But our translator wrote: ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ ("because his face was *going* to Jerusalem"). Even in ancient times this clause was difficult to understand, and so it was corrected in some Latin manuscripts, which were then followed by the Vulgate. There one reads: *quia facies eius erat euntis in Ierusalem* ("because his face was of one going to Jerusalem")—and this accords with what we read in a third-century Greek papyrus (𝔓⁴⁵): ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον ἦν αὐτοῦ πορευόμενου εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ ("because his face was of one going to Jerusalem").

But how did the Greek translator arrive at the notion that at that time Jesus' face "was going" to Jerusalem? Already with Grotius we find that there were some interpreters who, on the basis of 2 Sam. 17:11, thought this strange turn of phrase was an Hebraism. In that verse Hushai says to Absalom: וּפָנֶיךָ הֹלְכִים בַּקְרָב ("...and your face should go into battle"; LXX: καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου

πορευόμενον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν ["and your face going in the midst of them"]). This is most likely an example of courtly language, which is only preserved here—it is not otherwise attested in the ancient Near East. In other words, Hushai said to Absalom, "Your glorious presence must go into battle." From the Hebrew perspective, then, it is utterly impossible to assume that the sole occurrence of a polite Hebrew address influenced either the original Hebrew of Luke 9:53, or the Greek translator of the verse.

But there is another scriptural passage that has been overlooked when examining Luke 9:53, namely Exod. 33:14-15. There, after the sin of the golden calf, God says to Moses: פָּנַי יֵלֵכוּ וַהֲנִחֹתִי לָךְ ("My face will go and I will bring you to rest"). And Moses answers God: אִם־אֵין פָּנֶיךָ הֹלְכִים אַל־תַּעֲלֵנוּ מִזֶּה ("If your face does not go, do not make us ascend from this [place]"). The expression "face of God" refers here to his glory (Hebrew: כָּבוֹד; Greek: δόξα), as we see from Moses' request in Exod. 33:18: הַרְאֵנִי נָא אֶת־כְּבֹדֶךְ ("show me your glory").[12a] "Face" refers the hypostasis of the deity not only in the Hebrew Scriptures but also as early as in the language of the Canaanites.[13] For example, *Pᵉne Baʻal* ("the face of Baʻal") is the standard name of the Punic the goddess Tanit. A goddess of that name was worshiped in Palestine as late as [172] the first century C.E., and even later. The polite formula in 2 Sam. 17:11, which we mentioned above, shows that the hypostatic designation of the deity could also be applied in courtly language to a human ruler. In short, it was no mere coincidence that the Greek text of Luke 9:53, which says that Jesus' face "was going to Jerusalem," alludes to Exod. 33:14-15, which speaks of God's face going with Moses. Apparently, the three occurrences of "face" in Luke's Hebrew *vorlage* reminded the translator of a hypostatic

understanding of the face of Christ, with which he was already acquainted, according to which the face of Christ was closely related to the concept of God's glory. That is why he wrote that Jesus' face "was going" to Jerusalem.

But are there traces of such an early Christian conception of the face of Christ in the New Testament? We can answer in the affirmative because it is already presupposed in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. Luke 9:51-53 mentions Jesus' face three times, and in 2 Corinthians the face of Christ is spoken of twice (2 Cor. 2:10; 4:6). The fuller context of the second reference is of special importance. There Paul writes:

> But if our gospel is indeed veiled, it is veiled to those who are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unfaithful, so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ [τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ], who is the image of God, might not shine [αὐγάσαι]. For we proclaim not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For it is God who said, 'Let the light shine out of darkness,' who caused it to shine in our hearts for the enlightening of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ [τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ].

> *(2 Cor. 4:3-6)*

The passage is difficult, mainly because Paul is certainly working with pre-Pauline ideas; and it is scarcely possible to ascertain to what extent he added his own ideas or where he gave new meaning to preexisting material. When Paul spoke of "the enlightening of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6) he undoubtedly had in mind the face of Moses,

from which the glory of God shone (Exod. 34:29-35), since Paul had spoken about this earlier in the epistle (2 Cor. 3:7-18). But that does not fully explain the meaning of our passage.

The words "the enlightening [φωτισμὸν] of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" in 2 Cor. 4:6 are [173] parallel to 2 Cor 4:4: "so that they might not see the light [φωτισμὸν] of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." The phrase "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" corresponds to "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." Thus, "knowledge" and "gospel" are treated as synonymous in this passage. The connection between enlightenment and knowledge is not only pre-Pauline, it is taken over from Judaism. It is derived from the wording of the priestly blessing (Num. 6:24-26): "May he shine his face on you and be gracious to you" (Num. 6:25). These words are paraphrased in the Essene *Rule of the Community* as: "May he enlighten your heart with the understanding of life and grace you with eternal knowledge" (1QS II, 3). In the rabbinic midrash Sifre, too, Num. 6:25 is connected with the light of instruction and with insight and knowledge.[15]

Paul speaks in 2 Cor. 4:6 of the enlightenment of the heart[16] which leads to the knowledge of the glory of God; the Essene text also speaks of the enlightenment of the heart and of knowledge. The Essene text is based on the scriptural priestly blessing, which speaks of the shining of God's face. On the one hand, the face of God in Paul has a parallel in the glory of God, but on the other hand, Paul also speaks expressly of the face of Christ. We have seen that in Paul's letter 2 Cor. 4:4 corresponds to 2 Cor. 4:6. Paul says of Christ that he is the image of God. Was the face of Christ in verse 6 somehow related to the "image of God" in verse 4? We

can only hint at a possible connection here.**[17]** In Col. 1:15 it is said that Christ is the image of the invisible God. More important [174] for our consideration is that according to Hebrews 1:3 Christ is the "reflection of His glory and the impression of His essence." The Greek word ἀπαύγασμα (*apavgasma*, "reflection") is formed from the same root as αὐγάσαι (*avgasai*, "to shine") in 2 Cor. 4:4, and "glory" is also mentioned in our passage in 2 Corinthians. Referring to Hebrews 1:3, it is often noted that the Greek composition the *Wisdom of Solomon* says of Wisdom that it is "a reflection [ἀπαύγασμα] of eternal light, and an untarnished mirror of the work of God, and an image of his goodness" (*Wis.* 7:26). It seems, then, that our passages are connected with Jewish hypostatic speculation.

From Hebrews 1:3 and the parallel in the *Wisdom of Solomon* we may infer that the glory of Christ is a reflection of God's glory, but it may also have been thought that Christ's glory is simply the glory of God. We have seen that 2 Corinthians speaks on the one hand of the "gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" and on the other hand of the "enlightening of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Perhaps we may also assume that, according to the speculations underlying our passage, the "face of Christ" was an expression for the glory of Christ. Indeed, as we have seen, as early as the Hebrew Scriptures—and even earlier—the expression "face" was identical with the hypostasis of the Godhead. And if we now return to where we started, Luke 9:51-56, we have actually provided the evidence for our conjecture. The three references Jesus' face in the Hebrew original were important to the Greek translator, and what he understood by this he reveals when he says that Christ's face "was

going" to Jerusalem. He alluded to Exod 33:14-15, which speaks of God's face "going" with Moses.

The most beautiful statement I have found about the face of Christ are these words of Bengel:

> Qui Filium videt, Patrem videt, in facie Christi. Filius Patrem exacte representative ac refert. …in facie Jesu Christi, qui est Patris unigenitus et imago, et *manifestatus* [175] *est* incarne cum gloria sua.

> He who sees the Son sees the Father in the face of Christ. The Son represents the Father exactly as representative. [The *gloria Filii* ⟨glory of the Son⟩ is great precisely because the *gloria Patris* ⟨glory of the Father⟩ appears in him and through him]… in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the only-begotten and image of the Father, and was manifested in the flesh with his glory.[18]

Such were Bengel's remarks on 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 4:4, 6). But the Greek Church Fathers already used the word "face" in this sense.[19] Clement of Alexandria wrote that the face of God is the *logos* through which God is illuminated and recognized (*Paed.* 1.7 [PG 8.320]).[20] And Origen (Ps. 20:7), referring to Heb. 1:3, spoke of "the face of God, the imprint of His being." One wonders: Does the Greek patristic literature simply represent a perceptive interpretation, or does it represent a tradition that existed since early Christian times, which is visible behind Paul's words in 2 Corinthians? I suspect that the expression "face of Christ" as a reference to Christ's glory was already known to the Greek translator of Luke 9:51-56. Since the author of Luke himself seems not to have known Hebrew, it is clear that the hypostatic expression "face of Christ" was already at home in the early

Christian communities before Luke's Gospel was written.

If we assume that the Greek translator not only had an hypostatic understanding the thrice repeated word "face" in his Hebrew source, but also that it was he who misinterpreted the Hebrew word for pilgrimage as "ascension," then he interpreted the content of his Hebrew source in a christological sense roughly as follows: even before his ascension, when Jesus began his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus turned his physical face towards Jerusalem and his spiritual face, his glory, went ahead of him.

Is there any more we can say on this score? Perhaps the apocryphal *Gospel of Peter*, from the second century C.E., can elucidate matters further. Describing the death of Jesus, the *Gospel of Peter* says:

> And the Lord cried out and called: "My [176] power, O power,[21] hast thou forsaken me!" And having said this he was taken up.
>
> *(Gos. Pet. 5:19)[21a]*

The Greek verb ἀνελήμφθη (*anelēmfthē*, "he was taken up"), which occurs in *Gos. Pet.* 5:19, comes from the same root as the noun ἀναλήμψις (*analēmpsis*, "ascension") in Luke 9:51. Thus according to the *Gospel of Peter*, Jesus' *dūnamis*, his power, left him even before his death.

Bishop Serapion of Antioch (ca. 200 C.E.) was correct to see a connection between the *Gospel of Peter* and docetism (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6:12 §4-6). However, strictly speaking, the view that Jesus' divine aspect, his "glory," left Christ before his death is not necessarily heretical. The idea could have been entertained in order to rule out the possibility that what was divine in Christ died

with him on the cross. Did the translator of Luke 9:51ff. have a similar notion in mind when he read his Hebrew source? Perhaps what he meant was this: on the way to his Passion, Jesus turned his face to Jerusalem, and when the days of his ascension were fulfilled, the face of Christ went before him. In other words, the divine aspect of Christ, his glory, began to separate itself from the man Jesus in view of the crucifixion. The translator's thoughts are not clear because he adhered to the wording of his Hebrew source quite closely. He thought he recognized these ideas in his text; it was not his intention to import them into the text. In fact, we were only able to trace his christology because he added a single explanatory word: in verse 53 he said that Jesus' face was "going" to Jerusalem. From his point of view, the translator could then fruitfully (mis)interpret the Hebrew word for pilgrimage as "ascension."

If these conclusions are correct, then the translator's christological interpretation was formed from the interaction of two starting points. Before coming to the Hebrew text, the translator knew and accepted a certain christology. He understood the expression "face of Christ" as a hypostatic term referring to Christ's glory, and he had a conception [177] of Christ's power abandoning him before his death similar to that of the *Gospel of Peter*. The second starting point was his Hebrew *vorlage*, with its three references to Jesus' face. From the wording of this *vorlage* the translator concluded that Christ's glory had already begun to detach itself from Jesus. Thus the translator, inspired by his Hebrew source, believed he was on the verge of a profound mystery, the depth of which he, of course, could not quite fathom—because was, in fact, illusory.[22]

Although the passage in Luke 9:51-56 is an isolated example, the results of our examination can lead to more general reflections. It is commonly assumed today that the wording of the Synoptic Gospels as a whole, and of their individual pericopae in particular, has been adapted to express particular theological view points. But our example shows that even when a pronounced ideology is present, the translation can nevertheless adhere extraordinarily closely to the wording of the original. This is because the translator did not intend to impose his theological views onto the text, he rather believed that his views were derived from the text in front of him. One may also suppose that the historical and geographical frameworks (*Rahmen*) of the individual pericopae in the Synoptic Gospels show such great differences in the various Gospels because the redactors and the evangelists were generally not very concerned with preserving the exact wording of their sources. This lack of concern may often be the real reason for the liberties the evangelists took with the frameworks, rather than a desire on their part to smuggle their individual religious opinions into the text. It was also common in other ancient writings for redactors to paraphrase their source where they did not regard the information to be especially important. But those same redactors paid more careful attention to the wording of their source where it concerned something of major interest to them. Moreover, the editors and the authors of the Synoptic Gospels were not theological pamphleteers but devout Christians, "and therefore they ought not to act unjustly with the entrusted property, for they feared the wrath of heaven."**[23]**

[178] However, even those who are not prepared to accept these general reflections in order to test them by their own research will

concede that while the historical and geographical frameworks are often heavily edited, Luke's framework of the refusal of the Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-53) was translated from Hebrew so literally that the Hebrew wording can easily be reconstructed. This happened because the Greek translator mistakenly believed the words of his source contained vital information that he did not want to conceal from his readers. As a result, we are still able to determine that the introduction to the story of the Samaritan village was originally written in Biblical Hebrew. Perhaps the same is true of the original Hebrew form of at least some of the other frames.[24]

Two other lessons can be learned from our investigation. We have already dealt with the first: at least in our case, the translator did not radically rework his text to fit to his views, rather he read his opinion out of the text (and that is why he translated so literally). The second lesson concerns the intellectual history of early Christianity. It is practically certain that the Greek translator of the passage understood the "face of Christ" in hypostatic terms, as referring to the divine in Jesus, his glory. Perhaps the translator meant that Jesus' divine power left him before his death, and erroneously concluded—on account of the triple reference to Jesus' "face" in his Hebrew *vorlage*—that from the very beginning of his last journey, in view of the coming Passion, when the days of his ascension were completed, the glory of Christ began to separate from the man Jesus. The theological premises from which the Greek translator proceeded betray a reflective, developed and advanced christology. Moreover, such christological concepts existed before Luke, for the translator was not the author Luke himself, who did not know Hebrew. That such

developed christology existed prior to Luke is not so [179]
surprising in itself, since Paul's writings already represented a
developed christology. It is strange, however, that the author was a
Hebrew-speaking Jew who could write Greek. So what was the
origin of the translator and what was his *Sitz im Leben*? Was he a
Palestinian Jew, or a Hellenistic Jew who also knew Hebrew? Was
his christology Palestinian or Hellenistic? And can one even draw
a sharp distinction between "Palestinian" and "Hellenistic"
christology?

Click here to read the Whole Stones blog.

Notes

[*] This article originally appeared as David Flusser, "Lukas
9:51-56—Ein Hebräisches Fragment," in *The New Testament Age:
Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke* (ed. William C. Weinrich; 2 vols.;
Macon: Mercer, 1984), 1:165-179. Original page numbers are
marked at approximate breaking points in brackets like this: [110].

In this translation I have supplemented the article with a few
additional footnotes. These are marked with the letters "a," "b," "c,"
etc., appended to the number of the preceding footnote, e.g., **[11a]**.

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* 20:118; *Bell.* 2:232. See also Emil Schürer,
History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (3 vols.;
Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1898-1901 [vol. 1, 1901]), 1:569-70;

Menahem Stern, "The Province of Judaea," *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarumad Novum Testamentum; 2 vols.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 1:363-65. I accept here Josephus' more credible account in the *Jewish War*. According to the *Antiquities* many Galileans were killed in the tumult.

[2] The similarity between the incident under Cumanus and that recorded in Luke 9:51-56 is pointed out by Paul Billerbeck (Str-B, 1:557), Henry St. John Thackeray (*Josephus: With an English Translation* [LCL; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University; London: William Heinemann, 1927], 2:415), and Alfred Plummer (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, 5th ed. [ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1922], 263). Hugo Grotius (on Luke 9:53) correctly understood the refusal of the Samaritans.

[3] This desire of the sons of Zebedee may well be historical, since they could have believed Jesus possessed the ability to perform such a miracle. Personally, however, I find it difficult to believe that the two disciples could assume that they themselves possessed such supernatural powers as to summon fire from heaven, although this is not entirely impossible. Perhaps in the original account the brothers asked Jesus to perform the miracle himself, but the the Greek editor introduced this change. In any case, it is certain that the words "do you want us to say" are stylized in Greek and not in Hebrew.

[4] After the refusal of one Samaritan village, why would Jesus need to ask another Samaritan village? Whether one should understand a concrete political issue as a "description of Jesus'

ministry from an objective, christological point of view" (Hans Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit: Studien zur Theologie des Lukas*, 5th ed. [BHT 17; Tübingen: JCB Mohr, 1954], 58 = *The Theology of St. Luke* [trans. Geoffrey Buswell; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961], 66) is doubtful.

[5] See e.g. Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, (5th ed.; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958), 113.

[6] Bo Reicke, "Instruction and Discussion in the Travel Narrative," *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 73 (= SE 1; Berlin: Akademie, 1959): 206-216, esp. 211. Reicke suspects that the Hebrew word used in Luke 9:51 was מַעֲלָה (*ma*ᵃ*lāh*, "ascent"), which occurs in the headings of the Psalms of Ascent (Ps. 120-134) (LXX: ἀναβαθμός [*anabathmos*]).

[7] In 2 Chr. 9:4 it is an internal Hebrew corruption (cf. 1 Kgs. 10:5) which does not even occur in all Hebrew manuscripts.

[8] See e.g. Sifre Num. §89 (ed., H. S. Horovitz [Jerusalem: 1966], 90 end) and b. Pes. 8b. The pilgrims are said to "go up" to Jerusalem both in Hebrew and in Greek, including in the New Testament. Likewise, in his description of the incident with the Samaritans Josephus referred to the many Jews "who went up to the festival" (*Bell.* 2.232).

[9] Cf. Jer. 25:12, to cite just one example. This is also the only place in the Septuagint where the Greek word συμπληροῦν occurs, which is the verb for "to complete" in our passage (Luke 9:51). This compound verb occurs in the New Testament only in the writings of Luke (Luke 8:23; 9:51; Acts 2:1). The last passage

is similar to ours.

[10] Only the word αὐτός (*avtos*, "he"), from the phrase καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν ("and he set the the face") in Luke 9:51 was absent in the Hebrew original. It may be that αὐτός in Luke 9:51 was inserted into the verse by the Jewish translator or editor, since it is also found in Luke 17:11, a verse that speaks of the same geographic situation and which is similarly constructed: "And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, and he passed [καὶ αὐτὸς διήρχετο] through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." Perhaps in the Hebrew source Luke 17:11-19 formed the continuation of Luke 9:51-56. That would be pleasing since the grateful Samaritan in Luke 17:15-19 would contrast with the recalcitrant Samaritans in Luke 9:51-56.

[11] The concluding verse (Luke 9:56) may, but need not, be a literal translation from the Hebrew. It could have been written in Hebrew as well as in Greek.

[11a] In the original article Flusser cited Sota 66, which is erroneous. Probably he confused b. Kid. 66a, which preserves a fragment of a Second Temple period source composed in biblicizing Hebrew, with b. Sot. 22b, in which Alexander Yannai warns his queen against false Pharisees. For an analysis of the biblicizing features of b. Kid. 66a, see the "Introduction to 'The *Life of Yeshua*: A Suggested Reconstruction' Addendum: Linguistic Features of the Baraita in b. Kid. 66a" and the literature cited there.

[11b] It may be somewhat startling to read Flusser's claim that the source behind Luke 9:51-53 was composed in a biblicizing style of Hebrew, since he had earlier informed us that the Hebrew term

עֲלִיָּה, which Flusser believed stood behind the Greek noun ἀνάλημψις ("ascension"), belongs to the Mishnaic rather than to the Biblical Hebrew lexicon. And since Flusser does not discuss which are the biblicizing features of his retroversion, non-Hebrew speakers may be left scratching their heads. To fill in Flusser's laconic argument, we note the following biblicizing features of Flusser's reconstruction: 1) ἐγένετο δὲ + time marker + καί + aorist is an Hebraic structure, which in LXX usually represents וַיְהִי + time marker + *vav*-consecutive; 2) further use of the *vav*-consecutive for וישלח ("and he sent"), וילכו ("and they went") and ויבאו ("and they came") is according to Biblical Hebrew style (Mishnaic Hebrew did not use the *vav*-consecutive); 3) the quotation from Gen. 32:4 (if genuine) points to Biblical Hebrew; 4) the use of מַלְאָךְ (*mal'āch*) in the sense of "messenger" (rather than "angel") is more typical of Biblical Hebrew, whereas Mishnaic Hebrew would prefer שָׁלִיחַ or שָׁלוּחַ for "messenger." Flusser himself mentions the biblicizing phrase "when the days were fulfilled" (cf. Lev. 12:6; Esth. 1:5).

[12] David Flusser, "Die konsequente Philologie und die Worte Jesu," *Almanach für das Jahr des Herrn 1963* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig, 1963), 39-73, esp. 62 [Original reads 26, which cannot be correct. I have not ⟨yet⟩ been able to obtain a copy of this article —JNT.].

[12a] In his article "Paganism in Palestine" Flusser wrote: "'The Face' (*panim*) is a hypostasis of God…[also in] Gen. 32:24-40 [which] shows how the face of the divinity can be given concrete form of a man. Hence the place where Jacob wrestled with the Man is called Peniel or Panuel, God's Face." See David Flusser, "Paganism in Palestine," *The Jewish People in the First Century:*

Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum; 2 vols.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 2:1065-1100, esp. 1075.

[13] See Flusser, "Paganism in Palestine," 1075-1076.

[14] Or: so that they do not see.

[15] H. S. Horovitz, ed., Sifre Num., 44 bottom. See also Psalm 119:29 and the fourth benediction in the Shmone Esre (Amidah). See also Moshe Weinfeld, *Tarbiz* 45 (1975-1976): 21 n. 40 (Hebrew).

[16] Cf. Eph. 1:17-18: "that God…might give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation through knowledge of him, enlightening the eyes of your heart…."

[17] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (3rd ed.; Neue Theologische Grundrisse; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), 134-35. See also Jakob Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (FRLANT 76; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 45, 168 (on the "face").

[18] Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti in quo ex nativa verborum vi simplicitas, profunditas, concinnitas, salubritas sensuum coelestium indicatur* (Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1891), 686.

[19] See G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 1:186. Photius (*Bibliothéque*, 3 vols., ed. René Henry [Collection byzantine; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959-1962], 2:80) cites the following quote from the lost *Hypotyposes* of

Clement of Alexandria:

> Λέγεται μὲν καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς λόγος, ὁμωνύμως τῷ πατρικῷ λόγῳ,
> ἀλλ᾽ οὔ νυν οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ σὰρξ γενόμενος οὐδὲ μὴν ὁ
> πατρῷς λόγος, ἀλλὰ δύναμίς τις τοῦ Θεοῦ οἷον ἀπόρροια τοῦ
> λόγου αὐτοῦ, νοῦς γενόμενος τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίας
> διαπεφοίτηκε

> It is said that the Son is also called *logos*, of the same name as
> *logos* of the Father, but this is not he who became flesh, any more
> than the *logos* of the Father, but a divine power, a kind of
> emanation of his *logos*, which has become spirit (*nous*), pervading
> the hearts of men.

If these words—like the other things Photius read in the
Hypotyposes of Clement of Alexandria—are not a heretical
falsification, then one can perhaps understand the quotation in the
light of ancient Greek patristics: the Son as *logos* is a power that is
an emanation of the divine *logos*.

[20] See also the quote in the previous note.

[21] The originally Hebrew or Aramaic cry of Jesus was therefore
known to the author of the *Gospel of Peter* only in Greek. He
interpreted the Greek cry ηλι ηλι (*ēli ēli*, "my God, my God") as
"My power, O power"; showing that he supposed ηλι ηλι
represented an original Aramaic cry חֵילִי חֵילִי (*ḥēli ḥēli*, "my
strength, my strength"). It would be the same in Syriac. Moreover,
it has been supposed that the *Gospel of Peter* was written in Syria
(communication from Shlomo Pines).

[21a] Translation according to *New Testament Apocrypha* (2 vols.;
ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher; trans. R. McL. Wilson; Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1963), 1:184.

[22] It is not our task to consider to what extent the "discovery" of the translator of our pericope influenced the nature of the entire Lukan travelogue.

[23] See Flusser, "Philologie," 249 [This page number cannot be correct, but I am unable to make even an intelligent guess at what the right page number might be—JNT].

[24] Perhaps the question of the nature of frames (*Rahmen*) should be examined afresh. If it is true that the Greek redactors treated the frames in particular with great freedom as a consequence of their content not being valued as essential, then their different wordings in the individual Synoptic Gospels is not proof of their late origin, and thus the original frames must have been an integral part of the ancient reports.

Would you like to offer a correction or suggest an improved translation? You may do so below: