CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CONCLUSION: JESUS' ACTIVITY IN SAMARIA AND THE TRADITIONS COMMON TO LUKE AND JOHN

Both Luke and John record that Jesus in the course of his ministry set foot in Samaria and found there a response of faith. Luke recounts that Jesus, intending to enter a Samaritan village at the beginning of his trip to Jerusalem, sent messengers to prepare his way, who were rejected by the villagers (9. 51-56), whereupon Jesus and the disciples went on to “another village;” later on in the course of the journey, touching at least on the borders of Samaritan territory, 1 Jesus heals ten men of leprosy, only one of whom, a Samaritan, thanks him, whereupon he says to the Samaritan “Rise, go, your faith has saved you” (17. 11-19). The fact that Jesus after 9. 56 is mentioned as being in Samaritan territory makes it possible that Luke meant by “another village” 2 another Samaritan village, 3 though certainty on the point is not to be achieved. At any event, Luke’s placing 17. 11-19 after 9. 52-56 and not before it is his way of showing that Jesus was not deterred by the reception accorded his messengers in 9. 52-56, and that the last word as regards the Samaritans was not one of rejection but of faith (17. 19). 4 Thus in Luke’s gospel we have an anticipation

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1 That much is clear, whatever the difficult phrase δὲ μέσον Σαμαρείας καὶ Γαλιλαίας in 17. 11 may mean. The phrase is problematical in both the construction δὲ with accusative μέσον, and the mention of Samaria preceding that of Galilee. As regards the latter, Hirsch’s explanation (Frühgeschichte des Evangeliums, II, p. 227) that Samaria comes first because that is the way a narrator writing from the point of view of Judea would think of the journey from Galilee to Judea, does not correspond to the facts of experience. Lohse’s suggestion (“Missionarisches Handeln Jesu nach dem Evangelium des Lukas,” Theologische Zeitschrift 1954, pp. 7 f.) that Samaria is mentioned first because the story focuses on a Samaritan is a better one, though the sequence remains puzzling.

2 What happened there is not recorded.

3 K. L. Schmidt, Die Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu, pp. 267 f., is certain this is the case. Conzelmann, op. cit., p. 53, though he correctly cites the parallel between the rejection in Samaria at the beginning of the journey section and the rejection in Nazareth at the beginning of the Galilean section, is certainly wrong—as 17. 11 shows—in concluding from the parallel that Luke meant to convey that Jesus in 9. 56 once and for all quit Samaria.

4 This impression is strengthened by Luke’s placing of the parable of the good Samaritan in ch. 14.
in Jesus’ lifetime of the Church’s missionary activity among the Samaritans as it is recorded in Acts 8, an anticipation which serves to justify the latter. Indeed, though the travel narrative 9.51-18.14 contains much Galilean material, Luke by placing a Samaritan pericope at the beginning of it has, at the price of creating an obvious geographical discrepancy between that pericope and much of what follows, implicitly associated the whole travel narrative with Samaria, as the previous section is associated with Galilee and the following with Jerusalem. 2 Luke, then, has immensely magnified the importance of the Samaritan material. He has, however, not created it. The rejection parable, which of itself does not lend itself to a polemic in favor of a Samaritan mission, did not originate with him; 9.51 constitutes the introduction Luke added to the story as he found it. 3 The passage of the healing of the lepers one of whom was a Samaritan is likewise pre-Lucan, though v. 19b ἡ πίστις σου σέκωκέν σε stems from the evangelist, 4 and is his way of underlining that Jesus’ attitude towards the Samaritan was not different from his attitude towards Jews, the

1 e.g. the 13.31 ff. passage, where Jesus is warned that Antipas wishes to kill him; further 13.10, where in the Galilean pattern (cf. Mk. 1.21) he teaches in a synagogue on the Sabbath; further 10.13 ff., 11.14 ff. (cf. Mk. 3.22 ff.), 11.37 ff. (cf. Mk. 8.15), 12.33 ff. (cf. Mk. 6.19 ff.).
2 This three-fold scheme is reinforced by the fact that in 17.11 f. Jesus is still, according to Luke, in Samaria, despite the fact that some of the preceding material is Judean in origin, i.e. 10.28-37, 10.38-42, 13.1-5, 13.34 f.
3 ἐγένετο ... ἐν τῷ ... in that verse is typically Lucan, and Luke derived αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ... τοῦ πορευτέον αὐτῷ ἀραβαναλή from v. 53. Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel, p. 47, postulates further that the messengers in v. 52 were added by Luke, and he may be right.
4 So correctly Bultmann, op. cit., p. 33. It is true that Mark brings the phrase ἡ πίστις σου σέκωκέν σε twice, in both of which cases Luke follows him. But the fact that Luke brings the phrase independently twice (here and in 7.50), and the fact that πίστις is found twenty-seven times in Luke-Acts, whereas it occurs only five times in Mark and seven in Matthew, points conclusively to its having originated here with Luke. V.11 may also stem from the evangelist, who thus fitted the story about a Samaritan into a scheme of a trip through Samaria, but we cannot be sure on the point. Creed, op. cit., ad loc., postulates that the mention of Samaria at the story’s beginning pre-dates the identification of one of the lepers as a Samaritan, and explains how the latter identification came into being. But this is certainly incorrect; if anything, the opposite is true, i.e. the reference to Samaria at the story’s beginning was added in order to explain the presence of the Samaritan among the lepers. It is, however, quite likely that both the reference to Jesus’ being in Samaria and to one of the lepers being a Samaritan belonged to the account from the beginning.