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**THE TRAVEL NARRATIVE IN ST. LUKE
(IX:51—XVIII:14)**

BY THE REV. H. E. GUILLEBAND, M. A.

BATH, ENGLAND

THE usual view of this section of St. Luke's Gospel at the present time seems to be that it is in no sort of chronological order; indeed Dr. A. Wright, in his article on St. Luke's Gospel in Hastings' "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels" contends that the Travel Narrative is "a collection of undated material." Now it may be conceded at once that there may be one or two sections within these chapters, which belong to an earlier period of our Lord's ministry (XI:14-32 is probably an instance: cp. Mark III:20-30, Matt. XII:22-45); but the purpose of this paper is to point out certain remarkable undesigned coincidences between the Travel Narrative and the part of the Fourth Gospel that covers the same period, which seem to show that, on the whole, Luke's arrangement was much more chronological than is supposed.

The Travel Narrative begins with the definite end of the Galilean ministry, no return to Galilee being mentioned. If then we are to compare Luke with John, we must first consider at what point in the Fourth Gospel the end of the Galilean ministry should be placed. Now it is quite clear that our Lord was not working in Galilee after the Feast of Dedication (John X:40, XI:54, XII:1); but it is conceivable, as far as John's account is concerned, that He might have resumed work in Galilee between the Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication. On the other hand, the Synoptic account of the events between the Feeding of the Five Thousand and the end of the Galilean ministry scarcely seems to leave room for a journey to Jerusalem.

It seems therefore far more probable that the journey to the Feast of Tabernacles marks our Lord's farewell to Galilee. It would follow then that the period covered by John VII:10—XII:19 (from the Feast of Tabernacles to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem) is the same as that covered by Luke IX:51—XIX:44. If between

these sections of the two Gospels remarkable undesigned correspondences can be shown, it would at least give considerable presumption for the substantial chronological accuracy of Luke's narrative. At first sight, it would seem almost hopeless to fit the two narratives together. If we had Luke alone, we should suppose that the whole period between the end of the Galilean ministry and our Lord's arrival at Jericho on the eve of Holy Week was occupied by one slow and gradual progress towards Jerusalem. He sent out seventy disciples two by two to "every city and place whither He Himself was about to come," and though it is possible that several couples may have visited places of considerable size, yet a great deal of ground must have been covered, and following up their work must have been a long process for the Master. It was for the most part also an extremely public journey: He was continually teaching in synagogues and surrounded by great multitudes (see *e. g.* Luke XII:I, XIII:10, 22; XIV:25, XV:1).

But when we turn to the Fourth Gospel we find something very different from one long public progress from Galilee to Jerusalem. John mentions two journeys to Jerusalem. One of these was the journey to the Feast of Tabernacles, which he describes as a secret journey (John VII:10), and which cannot have been very slow, as our Lord started after all the other pilgrims had gone, and arrived in the middle of the Feast. The other is the final journey from Ephraim to Bethany (John XI:54—XII:1), the earlier stages of which, at any rate, must have been both swift and secret, as no word of our Lord's movements reached Jerusalem till He was quite near, and doubts were even raised whether He was coming to the feast at all. Between these two journeys, there is the flying visit to Bethany for the raising of Lazarus, and apart from that, only one period when there can have been any travelling.* I refer to the two months between

*The point at which this interval occurs in John's narrative is often supposed to be between vs. 21 and 22 of chapter X. But it is probable that our Lord left Jerusalem after the attempt to murder Him narrated in Jn. VIII, and that chapter IX belongs to His return two months later. Jn. X:27 seems to imply that the discourse in X:1-18 is fresh in the people's minds.

the Feasts of Tabernacles in October and the Feast of Dedication in December. For between the latter Feast and the departure from Ephraim, John tells us expressly that our Lord "remained" or "abode" either beyond Jordan in the place where John was baptizing, or at Ephraim, except only for the flying visit to Bethany.

We have then this contract between the two Gospels. John narrates two swift and secret journeys to Jerusalem, the second public in its final stage: and the intervening time, except for two months between October and December, was spent either at Jerusalem or in partial or complete retirement. Luke appears at first sight to narrate only one journey, but in any case the bulk of his narrative is of a journey or journeys both public and slow. But if a journey of this nature took place at all during this period, the only place that can be found for it consistently with John's narrative is during the two months between the Feasts of Tabernacle and Dedication. We should thus get *three* journeys; first a rapid and secret journey to the Feast of Tabernacles; then a slow and public journey occupying a large part of the two months until the Feast of Dedication, which would be in two stages, outward from Jerusalem, and then back to the holy city; and thirdly, the final journey to the Passover, swift and secret in its early stages, but public towards the end. Are these three journeys narrated by Luke?

We know that Luke XVIII:15 onwards, where he is joined by the other Synoptists, belongs to the final journey, but for reasons already given most of the Travel Narrative must belong to the second journey, not related by John. Let us now notice the following points.

(1) Luke IX:51 states that our Lord began to journey towards Jerusalem.

(2) Luke X:38-42 narrates an incident which most probably occurred at Bethany, just outside Jerusalem.

(3) Three chapters later, in XIII:22, we read of our Lord as going on His way through cities and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem.

If then the narrative is at all chronological, He must

have moved away from Jerusalem, much farther than Bethany, since the events of chapter X: and this verse XIII:22 must refer to a *second* journey, separate from that begun in IX:51.

(4) In Luke XVII:11 we read of our Lord on the border between Samaria and Galilee (as the Revised Version margin shows) travelling towards Jerusalem. Now this was the starting point of the Galilean pilgrims to Jerusalem, so, on the assumption above made, this verse refers to a *third* journey to Jerusalem. This, of course, is the view very commonly taken by harmonists, but I should like to point out that it does give us the three journeys to Jerusalem, which our data require. The argument is thus as follows:

(1) If the Travel Narrative really is what it professes to be, and not a mere collection of undated material, comparison with John would lead us to expect to find three journeys in it.

(2) If the Travel Narrative is chronological, we not only may but must see in IX:51, XIII:22 and XVII:11 allusions to three separate journeys.

But it is when we come to look at these three journeys more in detail, that we come to remarkable little undesigned coincidences between Luke and John. John tells us that our Lord went up secretly to the Feast of Tabernacles. Now in Luke IX:51, 52 we read that He started to go to Jerusalem, and began to go through *Samaria*. This was not the route by which other Jews would travel, and if He wished to reach Jerusalem unobserved, it is just the route He would choose. It is true that at first at any rate, He sent messengers before His face, but this was a necessary precaution, as He was going through Samaria, nor would it prevent Him from reaching Jerusalem unannounced, for there was no intercourse between the Jews and the Samaritans, and His doings in Samaria would not reach Jerusalem quickly. Further, in Luke X:1 we are told that our Lord took a step, which most probably had the effect of separating Him for the time being from all His immediate followers. He sent no less than seventy of them away on a mission. This fits in most

naturally with the supposition that He then pressed on alone to Jerusalem, and reached it unobserved, just as John says He did.

Thus John's statement that our Lord's journey to Jerusalem was secret is corroborated in two ways by Luke. First, He travelled through Samaria; and secondly, He sent the Seventy on a mission, and presumably went on alone. It may also be noticed that there is no mention of the disciples in John VII and VIII, which indeed does not prove that they were not with their Master, but at least agrees with the possibility that they were then absent, as our study of Luke has led us to suppose.

But when was it that the Seventy returned to our Lord to report on their mission (Lk. X:17)? Certainly the mission cannot have been over before He reached Jerusalem during the Feast; for He started after the other pilgrims, and reached the city before the Feast was over, so that the journey must have been a rapid one. It follows, therefore, that we must place their report *after* the Feast, and, as our Lord evidently was not in Jerusalem when they came to Him, after the events recorded in John VIII. But that He was still in Judaea, we may infer from the fact that a few verses later we find the incident at Bethany (X:38-42).

But now comes the question what happened during the interval between the report of the Seventy and the Feast of Dedication. For answer let us again look at Luke X:1. Our Lord sent the Seventy "to every city and place whither He Himself was about to come." This raises two questions. (1) Where were these places to which the Seventy were sent? (2) When did our Lord visit them?

(1) The possibility that these places were in Galilee, and that our Lord therefore returned thither after the Feast of Tabernacles, should perhaps not be altogether excluded: but the language of Luke IX:51 certainly implies the end of the ministry in Galilee, and in XIII:22 we find our Lord engaged in an evangelistic journey on the line of the route to Jerusalem: "and He went on His way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem." Much the more natural supposition

therefore is that the work of the Seventy, and our Lord's journeys following it up, lay among the large Jewish population east of Jordan, on and near the ordinary route between Galilee and Jerusalem. The idea that most of the Travel Narrative refers to work in Peraea is distasteful to some scholars: for instance, Dr. Wright in the article above quoted asks, "Who were these Peraeans that the wealth of the third Source should have been reserved for them?" And he adds that "not a single town or village is named till we reach the Markan Jericho." The question can be answered by reference to the article on Peraea in the same Dictionary, where reasons are given for the view that there was a considerable Jewish population on the east of Jordan. And as for the naming of towns and villages, how many towns and villages in Galilee are named in the Synoptic* *narrative*, other than Capernaum, Nazareth and Nain? See Mark I:39 and Luke VIII:1. There seems no solid reason, beyond an instinctive dislike of "harmonists," for objecting to this Peraean ministry of our Lord.

(2) When did He visit these places? The words, "whither He Himself was about to come" do not at all necessarily mean that He was going to begin the visitation immediately. In fact, the very terms of the report of the Seventy and our Lord's comment thereon seem to imply that He had not already been visiting the places where their triumphs had been won. On the other hand, as has been already argued, they must have covered a great deal of ground, even if their mission was quite a short one, and to follow it up must have required a long public journey, for which no room can be found except in the interval between the Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication.

Thus this travelling in Peraea, which is commonly dismissed as a mere harmonistic expedient, finds its reason and justification in the following up of the work of the Seventy. And, on the other hand, the supposition that this was the work on which our Lord was engaged after the Feast of Tabernacles agrees very well with the phe-

*The "woes on the cities" are not part of the narrative.

nomena of the Travel Narrative itself. At the end of chapter X our Lord is at Bethany, in XIII:22 He is at a distance from Jerusalem travelling towards it. Obviously, starting from Judaea to follow up the work of the Seventy east of Jordan, He would visit some of the places on the way out from Jerusalem, and some on the way back.

Lastly, in Luke XVII:11 we find our Lord "between Samaria and Galilee" (R. V. marg.), on His way to Jerusalem. Reasons have already been given for identifying this with the final journey to the Passover.

What do we know of this last journey? John tells us that after the raising of Lazarus, our Lord spent His time in retirement at Ephraim, which seems to have been in the north of Judaea; and that nothing was known of His movements at Jerusalem until so near the Passover as to raise serious doubts whether He was coming up to the Feast at all (John XI:54-57). Then, six days before the Passover, He appears at Bethany (John XII:1). The last journey then was from Ephraim, and was of such a nature as to leave the Jews in ignorance of His movements up to the last moment. Matthew and Mark simply relate that our Lord journeyed from Galilee through Peraea to Jericho, and thence to Jerusalem; and Luke joins their narrative with the story of the blessing of little children in Peraea (XVIII:15ff). At first sight the divergence between John and Luke (and indeed the other Synoptists) is remarkable. If our Lord started from the north of Judaea, how came He on the border between Samaria and Galilee, or in Peraea? The answer seems to lie in the circumstances narrated by John. It may first be remarked that while our Lord was prepared in the last resort to use supernatural means to escape premature arrest or death (Luke IV:30, John VIII:59, X:39), yet it was utterly against His methods to use such means if natural means were at all possible (John VII:1, X:40, XI:54).

Consider now what a journey direct from Ephraim to Jerusalem would have involved. The route lay entirely through hostile Judaea, and His enemies were keenly on

the lookout. Unless He used supernatural means, detection was practically certain and there He would have been, in a hostile country, far from the route followed by His friends from Galilee, and (humanly speaking) at the mercy of His enemies. Such a possibility it was clearly His policy to avoid. Moreover, it is exceedingly probable that the enquiry (which John tells us was made for Him as the Passover drew near) would make Ephraim itself a doubtful refuge. It would therefore be only in accordance with the intrinsic probabilities of the case, if He decided to go north through Samaria, and join the Galilean caravan route on the border of Samaria and Galilee, timing His journey so as to catch one of the last caravans, perhaps the very last. No doubt the Pharisees who questioned Him (Luke XVII:20) belonged to this caravan. We can well understand how, as caravan after caravan arrived from Galilee, and Jesus was not there, nor had anyone heard any news of Him, His enemies in Jerusalem would wonder whether He intended coming to the Feast at all. And His journey by the caravan route also gave Him the advantage of entering Jerusalem among the Galilean pilgrims, so that His enemies would not dare to attack Him as He arrived.

It may be objected that all the above arguments rest on the assumption that the notices in Luke XIII:22 and XVII:11 are to be taken at their face value, and that the Mission of the Seventy really did occur under the circumstances narrated by Luke; and that this assumption is what requires to be proved.

The answer is that the statements of any honest author should be taken at their face value, unless to do so involves either intrinsic improbability or contradiction of other authorities. It has been my endeavour to show that the substantial chronological accuracy of the Travel Narrative involves neither of these difficulties, but rather results in a striking series of obviously undesigned correspondences with the Fourth Gospel.

**SUMMARY OF EVENTS FROM THE END OF THE GALILEAN
MINISTRY TO THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.**

John VII:2-9: Jesus refuses to go up to Jerusalem with His brothers.

John VII:10, Luke IX:51-X:16: He goes up to Jerusalem secretly, travelling through Samaria, and sending the Seventy away on a mission to Peraea.

John VII:11-VIII:59: Events at Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Luke X:17-XVII:11: The Seventy report to Jesus in Judaea; incident at Bethany. He then starts on a journey to the places which they had visited, going to some of them on the way out from Jerusalem, and to some on the way back. Luke XIII:22 marks the point where He turned back towards Jerusalem.

John IX:1-X:42: Jesus is at Jerusalem immediately before and during the Feast of Dedication. He retires beyond Jordan.

John XI: Jesus comes to Bethany to raise Lazarus; but again retires to Ephraim in the north of Judaea.

Luke XVII:11-XIX:44, John XII:1-19: Jesus travels north from Ephraim, as late as possible before the Passover, joins the caravan route on the northern border of Samaria, and travels by the east of Jordan and Jericho to Bethany, whence He makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.