

The Elusive Jesus of Luke-Acts in Its Ancient Mediterranean Literary Context

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ABBREVIATIONS

All abbreviations follow the *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, Second Edition (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), with the following exceptions:

Ancient

Acts Thom.	Acts of Thomas
Apoll. Paradox.	Apollonius Paradoxographus
Apoll. Rhod.	Apollonius Rhodius, <i>Argonautica</i>
<i>Dial. Mar.</i>	Lucian, <i>Dialogue of the Sea-Gods</i>
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Bibliotheca historica</i> (<i>Historical Library</i>)
Diog. Laert.	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives of Eminent Philosophers</i>
Dion. Hal.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus
Eur.	Euripides
Hdt.	Herodotus, <i>Histories</i> (<i>Persian Wars</i>)
<i>H.H. Aph.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite</i>
<i>H.H. Ap.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Apollo</i>
<i>H.H. Dem.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Demeter</i>
Hom.	Homer
LEM	Longer Ending(s) of Mark
Nic. Dam.	Nicholas of Damascus
Max. Tyre	Maximus of Tyre
OTP&A	Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha
Paus.	Pausanias, <i>Description of Greece</i>
Philost.	Philostratus of Athens
<i>Pont.</i>	Ovid, <i>Ex Ponto</i>
Ps.-Apollod.	Pseudo-Apollodorus
Sil. It.	Silius Italicus, <i>Punica</i>
Verg.	Vergil
<i>Vit. Aes.</i>	<i>Vita Aesopi</i> (<i>Life of Aesop</i>)

Modern

AJEC	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity
ANS	Ancient Narrative Supplementa
BAC	Bochumer altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium
BMSEC	Baylor–Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity
CGLC	Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics
CSNTCO	Claremont Studies in New Testament & Christian Origins
CThM	Calwer Theologische Monographien
DSSSE	<i>The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition</i> . 2nd edn. Edited by Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1999.
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
<i>FPG</i>	<i>Fragmenta philosophorum Graecorum</i> . 3 vols. Edited by F. W. A. Mullach. Paris: Didot, 1860–1881.
GECS	Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies

GLXX	<i>Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum.</i> 24 vols. Edited by John William Wevers, Alfred Rahlfs, Robert Hanhart, Werner Kappler, Joseph Ziegler, Detlef Fraenkel, and Udo Quast. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931–2006.
HCNT	Hand Commentar zum Neuen Testament
IACOP	Institute for Antiquity and Christianity Occasional Papers
IBTS	Interpreting Biblical Texts Series
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
JHS	<i>The Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JITC	<i>Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center</i>
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NLCNT	New London Commentary on the New Testament
NTGL	The New Testament and Greek Literature
NTM	New Testament Monographs
Paideia	ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ/Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament
RLXX	<i>Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes. Editio altera.</i> Edited by Alfred Rahlfs. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.
SJS	Studia Judaeoslavica
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
THOTC	The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary
ThWQ	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten.</i> 3 vols. Edited by Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Dahmen. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2011–2013.
TPNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
TPGC	The Pelican Gospel Commentaries
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>

Unless otherwise indicated:

- Abbreviations follow lists above, here, and in the Bibliography;
- English translations of ancient texts are the author's own;
- ancient Greek and Latin texts of Graeco-Roman and Jewish primary sources are from the Loeb Classical Library (LCL);
- Greek and Latin texts of early Christian sources outside the New Testament (NT) are from Migne, *PL* and *PG*;
- ancient textual witnesses or recensions are indicated for differentiation when readings differ (omitted when readings agree or follow the edition in the Bibliography);
- Old Testament (OT) texts and citations follow Septuagint (LXX = RLXX or where RLXX and GLXX agree) with GLXX or other Old Greek (OG) designated, and text-critical sigla follow RLXX and GLXX;
- [unvocalised] Hebrew texts of non-biblical Qumran/DSS texts (1Q1-11Q31) follow *DSSSE*;

- English abbreviations for biblical texts/books follow those for the Hebrew Bible (HB) or Masoretic Text (MT) even for OG/LXX or Old Latin (OL) (e.g., ‘1 Kgs’ instead of ‘3 Kgdms’);
- HB texts, citations, and text-critical sigla follow *BHS*;
- OL texts, citations, and text-critical sigla follow the Vulgate (Vulg.);
- Greek NT texts, citations, and text-critical sigla follow NA²⁸;
- italics or other emphases in quotations are original;
- plural designations for mixed-gender groups are gender-inclusive (e.g., ‘heroes’ for heroes and heroines; ‘gods’ for gods and goddesses).

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the elusive Jesus of Luke-Acts in its ancient Mediterranean literary context and investigates the implications of this for Lukan composition and Christology. Scholars recognising characterisations or themes of elusiveness in biblical literature have addressed some Lukan instances, but without concentrating on Luke-Acts. Other studies have struggled to identify a suitable scheme for elusiveness data in ancient Mediterranean literature or New Testament Gospels. Previous studies offering christological and thematic explanations for Jesus' paradoxical presence and absence or 'secretive'/'mysterious' conduct, particularly the (so-called) '*Messiasgeheimnis*' or alternative *Geheimnis*-theories (e.g., '*Leidensgeheimnis*' in Luke), fail to account comprehensively for related motifs. Nevertheless, this thesis demonstrates how these and other relevant motifs, also pertaining to other characters or events, contribute to a portrayal of Jesus as an elusive figure and to a broader, more comprehensive and coherent thematic emphasis on elusiveness in Luke-Acts. Concentrated analysis is devoted to four episodes: Jesus eluding his parents during childhood (Luke 2:41-52); Jesus' Nazareth visit and escape (4:16-30); Jesus' (un)recognition and disappearance on the Emmaus road (24:13-35); and Jesus' differently perceived manifestation blinding Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-19a; 22:6-16; 26:12-18). In terms of other characters and events, this exploration involves accounts of Paul's escapes and survivals, incarceration deliverances of the disciples, apostolic pronouncements on dissidents, the Philip-eunuch story, and angelic activity. This reconceptualisation in terms of elusiveness offers a fresh perspective for reading Luke-Acts.

By utilising an eclectic literary-critical methodology which incorporates aspects of text-centred and reader-oriented approaches, this thesis employs an ancient reader as a heuristic device to demonstrate a characterisation of the elusive Jesus and thematic elusiveness in Luke-Acts. An ancient Mediterranean 'extratextual repertoire' of literary elusiveness offers the type of data which this reader would have invoked for reading the four focal episodes. This extratextual data also illuminates elusive characters and themes in other literature, notably gods and aided mortals in Homeric epic (especially the *Odyssey*), Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, and Yahweh, other supramundane figures, and aided mortals in Jewish texts.

As a result of considering Lukan depictions of Jesus' elusiveness in the light of ancient Mediterranean analogues, this project offers several new readings and expands or reinforces some readings less recognised in scholarship. In terms of Lukan composition, this thesis proposes that Jesus is characterised as an elusive figure which principally contributes to an elusiveness theme. This involves several motifs (including those related to *Geheimnis*-theories) and other elusive characters or events. This study highlights how Lukan elusiveness creates entertaining stories to maintain reader contemplation, inciting intrigue for continued reader engagement. This project also determines that Lukan depictions of elusiveness involve recognisably appropriated motifs and tropes rather than specific intertextual sources. Regarding Lukan Christology, elusiveness underscores commonly acknowledged Christologies (suffering and royal-Davidic Messiah; Son of God) as well as less recognised or implicit Christologies (divine visitor; judge; Wisdom) and indicates more continuity of Jesus' pre- and post-mortem physical transience or transcendence than critics normally allow. Ultimately, Jesus' elusiveness consistently indicates his exceptionally theomorphic identity whilst maintaining a degree of ambiguity inherent in Lukan Christology.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context and Scope of Research

1.1.1. Establishing the Research Context

Jesus' bewildering escape from Nazareth after his enigmatic sermon (Luke 4:16-30) raises numerous questions for the ancient reader and modern critics alike. Such questions pertain not only to intricacies of the evasion, but also to Jesus' character and to the relation of this elusive feat to other episodes in Luke-Acts.¹ For instance, is this an isolated incident or is Jesus elusive elsewhere? Moreover, what ancient analogues might illuminate representations of Jesus' elusiveness? In this thesis I examine Jesus' elusiveness in Luke-Acts, considering its implications for Lukan composition and Christology. Before establishing the research context, I must clarify my use of the term 'elusiveness'. I employ the term 'elusive' and its forms for real or abstract figures difficult to locate, obtain, retain, perceive, recognise, identify, or comprehend, who may exhibit transience or are characterised by a paradoxical presence-absence tension. This etic terminology lacks an equivalent *terminus technicus* in antiquity, but helpfully and aptly describes literary phenomena, characters, and conventions, which reviewing relevant studies will elucidate. Scholars have struggled to identify a holistic and coherent scheme that makes sense of elusiveness data in NT Gospels and Acts. Studies which have investigated elusiveness occasionally included Lukan instances, but otherwise focused on texts other than Luke-Acts.

¹ I treat Luke-Acts as two volumes composed and distributed separately (ca. 80–100 CE) by the same anonymous author 'Luke'. Some scholars deny authorial unity (Walters 2009; critiqued by Parsons and Gorman 2012) or caution against exaggerating unity (Parsons and Pervo 1993; Gregory 2003; Gregory and Rowe 2010). Although neither Luke nor Acts specifies necessary side-by-side reading for proper comprehension, the reader of Acts should recall the former volume (Acts 1:1) and these texts share significant narrative and theological affinities (O'Toole 1984; Tannehill 1986/1990; 1996, 19-27; Johnson 2005; Spencer 2007b; Green 2011). On Luke's reader see §1.3.1. Since in some non-fictional/factual narratives the intents and beliefs of authors are accurately channelled by narrators (Merenlahti and Hakola 1999, 37 [citing Genette 1980, 213; 1990, 764; Cohn 1990, 792]) or implied authors (streamlined versions of real authors [Phelan 2005, 45; cf. Ryan 2011]), I advocate this kind of continuity between the real author, implied author, and narrator for Luke and Acts. I understand the genres of Luke and Acts as biographical (Burrige 2004; 2011; cf. Adams 2013) with first-person 'asides' (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2) and 'we-passages' contributing to the narrator's reliability (Sheeley 1988; cf. Booth 1983, 169-240; contra Dawsey 1986; with Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:7; Darr 1992, 50-52; 1993; Kurz 1993, 147-49).

i. Elusiveness in Mediterranean Antiquity

Terrien demonstrates thematic continuity of the divine “elusive presence” underlying biblical literature.² His OT categories include: epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs; Sinai theophanies; divine presence in the ark, tabernacle, and temple; prophetic visions; Yahweh’s manifestations and hiddenness; Wisdom;³ and eschatological epiphanies. Among NT instances, his Luke-Acts examples include: Jesus’ birth annunciation (Luke 1); the transfiguration (Luke 9); the Emmaus road episode (Luke 24); the Damascus road encounter (Acts 9; 22; 26); a new temple (Acts 7); and the [rehearsed] Last Supper (Luke 22). Although Terrien’s study usefully highlights portrayals of divine elusiveness within biblical literature collectively, his biblical-theological methodology minimises attention to non-Jewish influences and individual texts.⁴

Pease subsumes various ancient Mediterranean literary motifs under thematic ‘invisibility’: concealment by physical elements, inducing sleep, blinding, or slipping away; disappearance (translation/deification); Jesus’ transfiguration and transformations in early Christian literature; Jesus’ missing body; and the Lukan Jesus’ resurrection appearances, Emmaus disappearance, and ascension.⁵ Pease suggests that invisibility is principally an otherworldly attribute of celestial figures (gods, heroes, personified forces, angels, and demons) or non-divine superhuman entities (spirits, souls, phantoms, and ghosts), including in dreams/visions.⁶ He determines that otherworldly agents cause human invisibility or vouchsafe powers, unless humans naturally achieve invisibility through ‘magic’ or imbued items.⁷ Although Pease’s motific relations, examples, and agential differentiation are noteworthy, invisibility is unsuitable as an encompassing theme for these phenomena in ancient Mediterranean literature, including in Luke-Acts. However described by

² Terrien 2000.

³ I capitalise ‘Wisdom’ as a metaphorical divine *prosopopoeia* or attribute/activity; cf. Ulrich Wilckens, “σοφία, σοφός,” *TDNT* 7:496-514; Dunn 1988, 267-72.

⁴ Others consider God’s concealment and revelation in the Pentateuch (Kaiser 2000), presence and absence in the Jacob narrative (Gen 25-35) (Walton 2003), or indirect involvement despite absence throughout HB (Freedman 2005).

⁵ Pease 1942.

⁶ Pease 1942, 1-10.

⁷ Pease 1942, 35-36.

observers, these distinct phenomena, including invisibility (physical transparency), are more appropriately subsumed under a broader elusiveness theme.⁸

ii. The Elusive Jesus in Mark and John

Wrede's proposed Markan '*Messiasgeheimnis*' ('messianic secret/mystery') involves several motifs, principally of Jesus' activity: enjoining silence; incognito and withdrawal; private dialogue; cryptic/parabolic teaching; and others' misunderstanding/incomprehension; all despite paradoxical revelation and uncontainable concealment.⁹ Wrede's scheme faced critique and modification, though no alternative theory has been without inconsistencies or accounted for every motif.¹⁰ Scholarly concern for historical questions¹¹ shifted to form- and redaction-critical enquiries.¹² Literary-critical approaches offered promising insights, such as Tolbert suggesting a delayed dénouement of Mark's plot for Jesus to sow the gospel before dying¹³ or Kermode and Fowler examining reader effects.¹⁴ MacDonald's contention that Mark imitates Homer's *Odyssey* by casting Jesus as a secretive and disguised figure like Odysseus accounts for some motifs (silence and privacy), but not others (misunderstanding and cryptic speech), though exploring literary backgrounds is constructive.¹⁵ Social-scientific approaches looking to secrecy conventions in terms of honour/shame¹⁶ and benefaction,¹⁷ or juxtaposing Jesus' resistance of honour with

⁸ Pease (1942, 34 n. 268) including incarceration deliverances (Acts 5:19-23; 12:7-18) and Philip's relocation (8:39-40) among 'disappearances' conflates phenomena. I employ 'disappear'/'vanish' terminology for physical removal (dematerialisation/relocation) and 'invisible' terminology for unseen presence.

⁹ Wrede 1901 [ET 1971].

¹⁰ The literature is voluminous. For histories of scholarship see Blevins 1981; Roskam 2004, 172-88; Morrison 2014, 168-74; cf. Perrin 1966. See introduction and reprinted articles in Tuckett 1983. Prominent theories include: 'apologetic' (Markan impositions explaining Jesus' unsuccessful ministry and death); 'epiphanic' (underscoring Jesus' uncontainable glorious revelation); 'theology of the cross' (Jesus exemplifying humility, ascertained by faith); 'θεῖος ἀνὴρ Christology correction'; and 'history of revelation' (Jesus' messiahship understood only after his resurrection) (see Räisänen 1990, 55-71).

¹¹ E.g., Bousset 1902; Schweitzer 2000, 303-314; Sanday 1904; 1907, 70-71; cf. Taylor 1948; Aune 1969; Dunn 1970.

¹² E.g., Bultmann 1963, 338-51; cf. Meyer 1960; Tyson 1961; Schmithals 2008.

¹³ Tolbert 1989.

¹⁴ Kermode 1979; Fowler 1996, 19-20, 155-56, 254-55.

¹⁵ MacDonald 1998; 2000a.

¹⁶ E.g., Pilch 1994; Neufeld 2014.

Roman imperial power, offer potential motivations for Jesus' 'humility'.¹⁸ However, these likewise do not account for some motifs (e.g., misunderstanding). Some motifs are not 'secretive'/'mysterious' or directly relevant to Jesus' messiahship,¹⁹ such as typical withdrawals (so Dibelius),²⁰ desiring privacy (so Moule),²¹ or misunderstanding of Jesus' works, teachings, and suffering (so Tyson).²² Notably, Räisänen disputes any motific unity forming a coherent theme or comprehensive Christology, but attributes the motifs to polemical reactions to non-messianic Jesus views expressed in Q.²³ Although 'the messianic secret' is a misnomer²⁴ and alternative theories have unsatisfactorily explained seemingly related motifs, critics should not cease to investigate alternative thematic coherence.²⁵

Stibbe sees Jesus as the elusive Christ in John.²⁶ This portrayal involves Jesus' physical actions: withdrawals or concealments (5:18; 7:1, 19-20, 25, 30; 8:37, 40; 10:39; 11:8); evasions of arrest/seizure (7:30, 44; 10:39; cf. 18:1-11); open and secret movements (7:4, 10, 26; 8:59; 11:54); and uncertain whereabouts (6:22-25).²⁷ He adds Jesus' concealing speech (metaphors: 2:19; 3:8; 4:13-14, 32), cryptic disclosures (*παρομιμία*: 10:1-5; 15:1-27; 16:25), and discontinuous dialogue²⁸ (during trial: 18:28-19:16).²⁹ For Jewish backgrounds, Stibbe proposes Yahweh's activity in OT patriarchal narratives (Gen 18; 32:22-32; Exod 3:1-4:17), divine hiddenness (Isa 8:17; 45:15; Ps 13:1; Jer 33:7), and elusive Wisdom (Pro 1:28; Sir 24; Bar 3:9-4:4; 1 En.

¹⁷ E.g., Watson 2010.

¹⁸ E.g., Winn 2014.

¹⁹ See Dunn 1970; Robinson 1973; Watson 1985.

²⁰ Dibelius 1919, 58-59.

²¹ Moule 1975, 244-45.

²² Tyson 1961; cf. Hawkin 1972; Hur 2019.

²³ Räisänen 1990. This involves positing and profiling communities, including with hypothetical source-material (Q) (Tuckett 2002a, 136).

²⁴ Donahue and Harrington 2002, 27-29. Räisänen (1990, 48) suggests 'the secret of the person of Jesus'. Theissen (1995) uses '*Persongheimnis*', but also '*Geheimnismotiv*'.

²⁵ Beavis 2011, 80.

²⁶ References in this section are to Stibbe 1993; cf. 1992, 86-92, 112, 131-47; 1994, 5-31.

²⁷ Dividing evasions (7:30, 44; 8:20, 59; 10:39; cf. 11:53-57; 12:36; 18:1-11) between three categories or physical elusiveness in John 5-10 into eight categories (Stibbe 1994, 22-23) seems artificially nuanced.

²⁸ Relying on Nuttall 1980, 128-29; Jasper 1986, 45-46.

²⁹ Cf. Hamid-Khani (2000) examines John's OT-rooted 'elusive' language and theology (e.g., misunderstood enigmatic speech).

42; 4 Ezra 5:9; 2 Bar. 48:36), and for Graeco-Roman backgrounds he suggests Dionysus' evasiveness (until willingly arrested) and discontinuous dialogue in Euripides' *Bacchae*. He also entertains John's reliance on the Markan 'messianic secret' (concealment: Mark 1:35-38; 7:24; 9:30-32), Matthean 'withdrawals',³⁰ and the Lukan Nazareth escape (Luke 4:30), Emmaus road episode (24:13-35), and 'escaping' in Acts (presumably 5:17-20; 12:1-10; 16:25-26).

Stibbe's conclusions that the 'messianic secret', Wisdom, and divine hiddenness are most influential and that Yahweh's elusiveness characterises Jesus seem premature given his offer of some proposals without analysis (e.g., Lukan passages).³¹ Some of his Johannine elusiveness categories are noticeably adapted *Messiasgeheimnis* motifs, though without consulting Wrede's exploration of John. Wrede, focusing on cryptic speech as hidden *παροιμία* (recasting Synoptic parables), dismisses withdrawals, secrecy in Galilee, and evasions or concealments as topically unrelated, subordinate, non-theological motifs (even if echoing Synoptic material) indicating danger of untimely arrest or suffering.³² However, these motifs relate more than Wrede supposed. John accentuates Jesus' evasiveness recognisable in Synoptic material, so Stibbe rightly includes them as characterising an elusive Jesus. Additional to Stibbe's Luke-Acts passages, we shall see how the Lukan Jesus evades hostility, withdraws, acts privately, causes incomprehension, and speaks cryptically (beyond parabolic instruction) or discontinuously, among other elusive conduct.³³

iii. Several Motifs Constitute Luke's Broader Thematic Interest in Elusiveness

The foregoing assessments intimate elusive characters and elusiveness themes in ancient Mediterranean literature, predominantly relating to Yahweh and supramundane figures in Jewish texts, to gods and aided mortals in Homeric epic and Euripides' *Bacchae*, and to Jesus in NT Gospels. This suggests a common elusiveness scheme expressed in this literature with NT texts perhaps drawing on the earlier texts.

³⁰ Relying on Good 1990.

³¹ Elsewhere, Stibbe (1992, 2, 91, 126-47; cf. 1994) at least elaborates *Bacchae* parallels. Stibbe (1993, 245-46; 1992, 90-92) also proposes an elusive historical Jesus or (so-called) 'Johannine community'.

³² Wrede 1971, 181-207, cf. 144.

³³ I use 'evasiveness' terminology more specifically for escape or avoidance, whether physically or dialogically (i.e., in speech), and thus a taxonomic subset (among others) of 'elusiveness'.

Moreover, the above scholarly studies display some interaction with Lukan instances of elusiveness, raising a question of its extent more specifically in Luke-Acts. Regarding Lukan composition, I shall explore how Jesus' elusiveness, which links and envelopes several conventions (e.g., those suggested by Terrien, Pease, and Stibbe), including *Geheimnis*-theory motifs, journeying, and divine visitation, contributes to a comprehensive elusiveness theme in Luke and extending into Acts.

According to Wrede, the Lukan Jesus openly identifies as the 'future' Messiah (Luke 4:16-30) and speaks publically about his necessary passion (19:48; 20:45; 21:38; 22:2, 6; 23:27, 48) which people cannot comprehend, including disciples because of divine restraint (9:43-45; 18:34; cf. 10:23-24) and inaccurate messianic expectations (19:11; 24:19, 21; Acts 1:3, 6) but who understand this '*Leidensgeheimnis*' ('suffering/passion secret/mystery') after the resurrection (Luke 24:13-49).³⁴ Accordingly, Jesus, a wonder-working prophet (Acts 2:22; 10:38) through whom God visits his people (Luke 7:16), prohibits premature messianic identification since he becomes the Messiah after suffering and exaltation (Acts 2:36; 5:31).³⁵ Lukan scholars perpetuate *Geheimnis*-theories with little or no acknowledgment of aforementioned complications since Wrede.³⁶ Conzelmann and others espouse *Leidensgeheimnis* variations.³⁷ Tannehill and Wolter even speak of Jesus concealing his messiahship,³⁸ but Jesus' suffering actually results from apparent messianic claims (Luke 22:66-71; 23:1-2) and is ironically regarded as evidence against his messiahship (23:35-39; 24:19-21). *Geheimnis*-theory motifs are not all easily relatable to a mystery of messiahship or suffering. Furthermore, considering special Lukan material and Acts, these and other motifs might form a broader theme.

³⁴ Wrede 1971, 164-80, 213-30, 237-43. Luke omits Markan incomprehension instances (Mark 6:52; 7:18; 8:16-21), possibly due to his so-called 'great omission' of 6:45-8:26 (Wrede 1971, 169, 173), but also Peter's comprehension and attempted prevention of Jesus' suffering (8:32-33; cf. Luke 9:18-26).

³⁵ Wrede 1971, 241-43.

³⁶ E.g., Fuller 1965, 228; Ellis 1966, 173, 225; Grundmann 1966, 189; Harrington 1967, 90; Wanke 1973, 88-95; Marshall 1978, 393; 1988, 66; Johnson 1991, 132, 142; Bock 1994/1996, 2:1499; Parsons 2015, 144.

³⁷ Conzelmann 1960, 55-94, 196-99; Dillon 1978, 18-68; 1981, 213; Crump 1992, 96-108; cf. Dawsey 1986, 88-94; for Strauss (1995, 254-58, cf. 261-336), Jesus alludes to suffering as a 'prophet' and 'Son of Man' since as 'Messiah' was unanticipated. Yet, 'Son of Man' was not devoid of messianic connotations (see Horbury 1985; Grabbe 2016, 190-94).

³⁸ Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:284; Wolter 2016, 1:218-19, 1:383, 2:557 (*Messiasgeheimnis* of 'χριστός'). Luke 1-4 opens disclosing Jesus' messiahship from conception (O'Toole 1985; Fredriksen 1988, 28, 208-209; Strauss 1995, 76-125, 199-260).

Although scholars initially recognised the Lukan journey motif in the *Reisebericht* ('travel narrative', 9:51-18:14/19:45) with Jesus' resolute journey to Jerusalem where he must suffer³⁹—recognisable partly by *Reisenotizen* ('journey indicators')—others rightly expanded it throughout Luke-Acts to include other characters and themes.⁴⁰ Robinson examines *Reisenotizen* such as πορεύομαι (Luke 13:33; 22:22), δεῖ (Luke 2:49; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 24:7, 26; Acts 3:21; 17:3), and 'way' *lexeis* (ὁδός: Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; ἔξοδος: Luke 9:31; εἴσοδος: Acts 13:24; δρόμος: Acts 13:25; 20:18ff.).⁴¹ He suggests that Jesus' and Paul's journeys are salvation-historical fulfilments of divine visitation expectations.⁴² Baban demonstrates the prominence and coherence of journeying, especially on roads (Emmaus: Luke 24:13-35; Damascus: Acts 9; 22; 26; Gaza: Acts 8:26-40), proposing Luke's Hellenistic mimesis relating journeying beyond *Heilsgeschichte* or Christology to a *hodos* theology of encountering Jesus.⁴³ Nevertheless, Jesus' and his disciples' constant journeying contextually reflects the indomitability of God's agents and plan.

The journey motif is inextricable from a divine visitation and (in)hospitality theme, specifically God's visitation through Jesus (also angels and disciples) for salvation or judgment.⁴⁴ Grundmann and Robinson detect this theme in the *Reisebericht*⁴⁵ and Coleridge identifies it in the infancy narrative.⁴⁶ Denaux perceives literary reception of Homeric divine visitation and (in)hospitality (e.g., Gen 18-19), adapted by Luke for this theme (Luke 1:5-38, 68-78; 7:1-50; 9:51-10:24; 10:38-42;

³⁹ See Blinzler 1953; Conzelmann 1960, 60-73; Davies 1964; Goulder 1964.

⁴⁰ Navone 1968; 1972; Filson 1970 (biblical pattern); cf. Denaux 1997 (OT journeying models). Themes include: following a Deuteronomistic narrative (Evans 1955; Robinson 1960, 26) with Jesus as Mosaic prophet (Moessner 2016, 252-58); instructing disciples and debating antagonists (Reicke 1959); and didactic-paraenetic journey modelling exemplary conduct (Schneider 1953; von der Osten-Sacken 1973). See summaries: Nolland 1989-1993, 2:525-31; Moessner 2016, 205-212.

⁴¹ Robinson 1960; cf. Gill 1970 (strategically organised *Reisenotizen*, e.g., πορεύομαι relating to suffering in the Last Supper and Emmaus narratives).

⁴² Robinson 1964.

⁴³ Baban 2006, 49-50, 277-79. Pitts (2016, 108) criticises Baban's amalgamation of ancient and modern literary mimesis.

⁴⁴ Cf. recurrent lodging travellers (Cadbury 1926; Dillon 1978, 238-49); Koenig 1985 (NT hospitality, including divine visitation in Luke-Acts); Arterbury 2005 (ancient Mediterranean hospitality and the Gentile mission [Acts 10-11]).

⁴⁵ Grundmann 1959 (necessary journey for messianic suffering [Luke 24:13-35]); Robinson 1964. B.P. Robinson (1984, 485-93) sees Jesus' role as guest only moderately recognised.

⁴⁶ Coleridge 1993, 22-24, 119-23.

14:1-24; 19:14-44; 24:13-35).⁴⁷ Byrne proposes this as Luke's principal theme.⁴⁸ Jipp argues for the Malta episode (Acts 28:1-10) shaped as a theoxeny—an unrecognised divine guest shown (in)hospitality—modelling an appropriate Gentile response to Paul's salvific message.⁴⁹ Recently, Whitaker examines metamorphosis and (un)disguised/(un)recognised divine and hero visitor stories to determine whether Jesus is depicted as a returning disguised hero or unrecognisable god aiding supporters in NT and apocryphal resurrection appearance stories.⁵⁰ We shall see how journeying and divine visitation concern matters beyond Jesus' messiahship or suffering as constituents of thematic elusiveness in Luke-Acts.

Jesus eludes his parents (Luke 2:41-52), evades hostility until a determined time (4:28-30; 13:31-33; 20:19-20; 22:21-22, 52-54; 24:7), causes perplexity (2:49-51b; 4:22; 10:21-24; 19:42-48⁵¹), withholds his identity (24:13-31a), (dis)appears (24:31b, 36), and manifests his blinding heavenly presence (Acts 9:1-9; 22:3-21; 26:9-18). To these are added other characters and events, such as Paul's indomitability and escapes (9:22-25, 29-30; 14:19-20; 20:3, 19; 23:11-35; 28:1-6; cf. 21:27-39), incarceration deliverances (5:17-20; 12:1-10; 16:25-26), Philip's peculiar encounter with the eunuch and extraordinary departure (8:26-40), efficacious apostolic pronouncements upon dissidents (5:1-11; 8:4-25; 13:6-12), and angelic activity (appearances, departures, and supernatural control). My contention is that these and other accounts or conventions, including those associated with *Geheimnis*-theories, journeying, and divine visitation, contribute to the portrayal of an elusive Jesus and constitute a comprehensive elusiveness theme in Luke which extends into Acts.

1.1.2. Luke's Elusive Jesus: Focusing the Scope of Research

Elusiveness of Jesus and of others permeates Luke-Acts, offering plentiful material for a substantial investigation. Considerable detail in four episodes (including their co-texts) merit focused analysis: the child Jesus story where Jesus

⁴⁷ Denaux 1999.

⁴⁸ Byrne 2000.

⁴⁹ Jipp 2013; cf. Frenschkowski 1995/1997, 2:125-43.

⁵⁰ Whitaker 2019.

⁵¹ Cf. Mark 11:17-18.

separates from his parents without their knowledge (Luke 2:41-52), the Nazareth pericope where Jesus escapes near execution (4:16-30), the Emmaus road account where Jesus is (un)recognised and disappears (24:13-35), and the Damascus road encounter where Jesus manifests differently (im)perceptible to witnesses and blinds Paul (Acts 9; 22; 26). These will serve as my focal episodes. Three are unique to Luke-Acts and the Nazareth pericope is so heavily redacted and expanded that Lukan distinctiveness is evident (cf. Mark 6:1-6; Matt 13:54-58).⁵² Furthermore, these are significant illustrations of phases of Jesus' life and afterlife: childhood, adult ministry, resurrection appearances, and ascended-exalted status. Since these episodes evoke association with contextual representations of elusiveness, examining comparable ancient Mediterranean literary conventions (motifs and tropes) outside Luke-Acts will illuminate their readings and thus Lukan compositional and christological interests more broadly. Moreover, my focal episodes involve depictions of Jesus' presence and absence and will usefully serve as lenses through which I may view related Lukan motifs and passages, particularly those associated with *Geheimnis*-theories, but also others, especially considering their proleptic or analeptic content and functions, as will become clear. This will allow discussion of related material in my exegetical chapters dedicated to each focal episode. More specifically, I primarily address motifs of withdrawal, misunderstanding, and cryptic teaching in relation to the childhood story (Chapter 4), hostility evasion in relation to the Nazareth pericope (Chapter 5), and privacy in relation to the Emmaus road episode (also silencing; Chapter 6) and the Damascus road encounter (Chapter 7), though some motifs certainly relate to multiple focal episodes. Finally, these focal episodes are conducive to comparison with representations of other elusive characters or events within Luke-Acts, particularly the disciples' escapes and survivals, the Philip-eunuch story, the apostles' mediation of supernatural control, and angelic activities, especially given intratextual associations, as we shall see.

The transfiguration account (Luke 9:28-36) contains elements perhaps common to the four episodes on which I concentrate (e.g., transformation, luminosity,

⁵² Affinities support redaction of Mark 6:1-6 (and perhaps Matthew/Q) with appropriated/composed material over received tradition or variant sources (see Tannehill 1972; Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:526-27; Dupont 1978, 134-41; *pace* Violet 1938; Schürmann 1970; cf. Radl 2003, 247-52). Although Paul's letters reference the Damascus road incident, it is distinctively Lukan among NT Gospels and Acts.

concealment, and [dis]appearance) and, as intimated above and below, is often discussed in scholarship in relation to my focal episodes. Although including the transfiguration as an additional focal episode in this project would offer another test case from Jesus' earthly ministry, the programmatic Nazareth episode serves well as a basis for addressing other significant examples of elusiveness during Jesus' adulthood, including his transfiguration. This maintains a balance of concentration on one episode per phase of Jesus' life and afterlife. In fact, the transfiguration occurs during Jesus' earthly ministry, but previews his resurrected or ascended-exalted state with reference to his impending 'departure' (τὴν ἔξοδον, Luke 9:31) referring to his 'exodus' from earthly life, thus pertinent to discussions of his pre- and post-mortem phases of existence. Additionally, Luke's transfiguration account shows significant overlap with other Synoptic accounts, being less uniquely Lukan, even if features of Lukan redaction are clearly detectable (cf. Mark 9:2-9//Matthew 17:1-8). Discussing the transfiguration alongside related elements in my focal episodes and their readings will be most helpful, particularly in relation to the misunderstanding motif (§4.2.1), corporeal malleability (§5.2.2), (un)recognisability and glory (§6.1.1), privacy (§6.2.1), and epiphanic features (e.g., luminosity) or terminology conducive to intratextual comparison with Christophanies (§§7.1.2; 8.2.1).

Similarly, since Jesus' parables certainly are within the contextual contours of this project, I also address these in relation to my focal episodes rather than as a separate test case. I include such instances among other examples of Jesus' cryptic speech or speaking, beneficially highlighting intratextual connections throughout Luke and Acts. For example, Jesus' divine sonship, which emerges in the four focal episodes, is highlighted when he subtly represents himself as a vineyard owner's (i.e., God's) 'beloved son' rejected by tenants (i.e., scribes and chief priests) in Luke 20:9-20 (§4.2.2). Jesus also subtly expresses his divine sonship in non-parabolic cryptic speech (e.g., 10:21-24). Aside from parabolic content as cryptic speech, Jesus' parabolic pedagogy is itself a form of action described by the narrator (Luke 5:36; 6:39; 8:4, 9; 12:16; 13:6; 14:7; 15:3; 18:1, 9; 19:11; 20:9, 19; 21:29).⁵³ Räsänen recognises that Jesus' esoteric pedagogy eclipses its esoteric content.⁵⁴ Given these

⁵³ Actions and speech could be assessed for metonymical or indirect characterisation in Graeco-Roman hermeneutics (de Temmerman 2010, 33-38).

⁵⁴ Räsänen 1990, 132-33 (speaking of the Markan Jesus).

observations, it is useful to address the parables alongside discussions of Jesus' other cryptic speech or conduct in my focal episodes, which will be mutually illuminating.

I argue in this thesis that Jesus is portrayed as elusive, particularly examined through my four focal episodes and underscored when compared with other Lukan characters and events. I suggest that this portrayal along with other elusive characters and events form an encompassing and coherent thematic emphasis on elusiveness in Luke-Acts. This requires rethinking interpretations of accounts and literary conventions forming this theme which contribute to understanding Lukan compositional dynamics and Christology. The following appraisal of scholarship on these focal episodes reveals the need for investigation of particular conventions and readings.

i. The Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

The child Jesus eludes his parents in Jerusalem where they locate him in the temple conversing with teachers then responds esoterically when questioned about his conduct (Luke 2:41-52). Bultmann and de Jonge appeal to child prodigy parallels, such as Solomon (1 Kgs 2:12), Abraham (Jub. 11:16), Joseph (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.230), Samuel (*Ant.* 5.348), Josephus (*Life* 9), Moses (Philo, *Mos.* 1.21), Cyrus (Hdt. 1.113-15; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.3.1-18), Alexander (Plutarch, *Alex.* 5), Apollonius of Tyana (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7-8, 11), and Epicurus (Diog. Laert. 10.14).⁵⁵ However, researchers stress precocity over other details and differences. Luke's story highlights parental distress and search for an intentionally elusive youth on a divine mission, emphases absent in suggested analogues. Accounts of youths journeying on divine missions are worth consideration, such as Telemachus in the *Telemacheia* (Hom., *Od.* 1-4, 15) or Tobias in Tobit 5-12, stories (or underlying myths) probably related intertextually.⁵⁶ Additionally, de Jonge and Strauss, among others, emphasise Jesus' possession of wisdom⁵⁷ rather than Jesus representing Wisdom, the latter meriting further exploration considering elusive Wisdom traditions.

⁵⁵ Bultmann 1963, 300-301; de Jonge 1978.

⁵⁶ See Fries 1911; MacDonald 2001; 2015a, 341-350, 376; Nickelsburg 2001 (adding Jacob: Gen 27-35; Jub. 27, 31).

⁵⁷ De Jonge 1978; Strauss 1995, 120-23; Green 1997, 153-58; Bovon 2002–2013, 1:106-115.

ii. Jesus in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30)

Jesus visits his hometown where he is welcomed, then rejected, but escapes execution in the programmatic Nazareth pericope (Luke 4:16-30).⁵⁸ Scholars recognise this passage as part of Luke's divine visitation theme, but have not considered it as a theoxenic trope. Denaux glosses it as an example of Jesus wandering and visiting compatriots.⁵⁹ Byrne and Jipp concentrate on thematic content and allusions.⁶⁰ Additionally, scholars have not considered potential evocations of Jewish divine hiddenness or elusive Wisdom, especially with Jesus' departure.

Studies mostly focus on redaction,⁶¹ OT intertextuality and Jesus' message,⁶² the Nazarenes' altered demeanour,⁶³ or all these⁶⁴—including everything in 4:16-27—but not niceties of the ending which are subsumed under these interests, glossed, or omitted.⁶⁵ However, I give significant place to Jesus' evasion of execution (4:28-30). The vagueness of escape—'But he, passing through the midst of them, was proceeding on' (αὐτὸς δὲ διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν ἐπορεύετο, 4:30)—produces various construals.⁶⁶ Some scholars are uncommitted about its manner or nature (miraculous or non-miraculous).⁶⁷ Fitzmyer says that a miracle would give the demanded sign (4:23),⁶⁸ but this pertains to exorcisms/healings, not escape. Commentators also disagree on Jesus' role⁶⁹ in his liberation, whether he delivers

⁵⁸ Jesus' public ministry begins with teachings and wonders in Mark 1:21-45 or a sermon in Matthew 5:1-7:29, but with the relocated Nazareth account in Luke 4:16-30 made programmatic for Luke-Acts, illustrating broad rejection of Jesus inevitably benefiting Gentiles (Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:529; Tannehill 1972; 1986/1990, 1:68-73; 1999, 331-33; Eltester 1972, 135-36; Tiede 1988, 101-102).

⁵⁹ Denaux 1999, 260-61.

⁶⁰ Byrne 2000, 45-53; Jipp 2013, 220, cf. 223-35; 2017, 20-22.

⁶¹ Schürmann 1969, 1:241-44; Marshall 1978, 177-90; Catchpole 1993; Radl 2003, 247-66.

⁶² Crockett 1969; O'Toole 1995.

⁶³ Anderson 1964; Kilgallen 1989; Siker 1992, 85-86.

⁶⁴ Hill 1971.

⁶⁵ See Schreck 1989 (scholarship between 1973–1988).

⁶⁶ Maxwell's (2010) and Dinkler's (2013) studies of indeterminacies in Luke-Acts do not assess Luke 4:30.

⁶⁷ Marshall 1978, 190; Danker 1988, 110; C.F. Evans 1990, 275; Nolland 1989–1993, 1:201; Parsons 2005, 83-84. I use 'supernatural'/'miraculous' for ancient phenomena perceived as sourced in superhuman/cosmic power (similarly, Kiffiak 2017, 47-49).

⁶⁸ Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:538-39.

⁶⁹ I use 'actional role' with reference to the conceptual subject and/or object of actions, not necessarily indicated by grammatical voice but ascertained at the discourse level (§1.3.1).

himself⁷⁰ or is rescued.⁷¹ Interpreters espousing divine deliverance connect the intent to throw Jesus down in 4:29 with the temptation ensuring angelic succour in 4:9-12 quoting Ps 90:11-12/91:11-12 HB.⁷² Longenecker develops this view in a monograph on how the narrative gap of Luke 4:30 also engenders imaginative interpretations in contemporary fictional novels and films.⁷³ Yet, scholars have not unpacked this reading's implications. How does it explain Jesus not actually cast down from the cliff, unexpressed angels, or διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν?

Commentators tend to link Jesus' escape with evasions in John (7:30; 8:59; 10:39; cf. 18:6),⁷⁴ such as Creed postulating disappearance,⁷⁵ Bovon positing (so-called) 'θεῖος ἀνὴρ' power,⁷⁶ or Johannine specialists,⁷⁷ especially since John 8:59 textual witnesses add verbiage from Luke 4:30 and *P. Eger. 2* (ca. 150–250 CE).⁷⁸ Smith parallels invisibility/impalpability, disappearance, and escape formulae in 'Greek Magical Papyri' (*PGM*) to escapes in Luke and John, suggesting Jesus' actions as a 'magician' (also like Apollonius' disappearance [Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5]).⁷⁹ However, conflating interpretations of Lukan and Johannine accounts is

⁷⁰ Plummer 1922, 129-30; Klostermann 1929, 65; Geldenhuys 1971, 169.

⁷¹ Wolter 2016, 1:209 (divine intervention); Ellis (1966, 98) references angelic protection (Dan 6:22); MacDonald (2015a, 141-43; 2019, 58-60) suggests imitation of Athene helping Telemachus, including evading Ithacans (Hom., *Od.* 2.1-259; 4.600-673; 15.292-300). However, aside from lacking lexical contacts, Athene facilitates Telemachus' nautical voyage. Luke and his reader likely knew the *Telemacheia* (MacDonald 2015a, 142, 341-350, 376), but it is more comparable to the childhood story.

⁷² Schürmann 1969, 1:240-41; Leaney 1971, 51-52, 120; Bock 1994/1996, 1:420; Green 1997, 1-6, 11-20, 21-25, 219; Radl 2003, 265; Eckey 2004/2006, 1:231; already Bede, *In. Luc.* 2.349-58.

⁷³ Longenecker 2012.

⁷⁴ Wellhausen 1904, 11; Plummer 1922, 130; Ellis 1966, 98; Grundmann 1966, 123; Marshall 1978, 190; Edwards 2015, 142.

⁷⁵ Creed 1957, 69.

⁷⁶ Bovon 2002–2013, 1:156-57.

⁷⁷ Barrett 1978, 353; Brown 1966, 1:318, 360 (John 8:59 non-miraculous unlike Luke 4:30), cf. 2:810.

⁷⁸ John 8:59 variants include [καὶ] διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν (with καὶ: κ^{2b}) [ἐπορεύετο] καὶ παρήγεν οὕτως (with καὶ and ἐπορεύετο: κ^{2a} C L N Ψ 070 33 579 892 1241 sy^{(p),h} bo; without καὶ and ἐπορεύετο: A K Γ Δ Θ^c $f^{1,13}$ 565 700 1424 \mathfrak{M} [f] q) (NA²⁸, 327). Bell and Skeat (1935) transcribe *P. Eger. 2* with reconstructions; cf. Erlemann's (1996, 32-34) reproduction. *P. Köln* 255 contributed to the most incomplete of the three codex leaves (Gronewald 1987; Nicklas 2007). Malik and Zelyck (2017) suggest ca. 150–250 CE. Theories of these representing a proto-John (Bell and Skeat 1935, 30-41) or pre-Johannine text (Watson 2013, 286-340) remain speculative.

⁷⁹ Smith 1978, 171, 120-21, 200. Smith's non-contextual comparisons produce mistaken conclusions (Horsley 2015, 68-74).

unconducive to distinct understandings. Moreover, determining whether Luke 4:30 suggests disappearance or physical presence is crucial.

Several critics propose that Jesus compels the mob to allow his poised departure, naturally⁸⁰ or supernaturally,⁸¹ yet without ancient examples. This reading will benefit from exploring instances of control. Treatments also tend to overlook ‘passing through’ analogues, notwithstanding Klostermann’s fourth-century CE example (*Cyranides* 2.11)⁸² or Busse’s inapplicable account (Dio Chrysostom, *Tyr. [Or. 6]* 60 about apathy, not escape).⁸³ Scholars have not explored how Jewish theophanic traversal connoting divine judgment (e.g., Exod 12:12; Amos 5:17) might clarify the peculiar phrase in Luke 4:30.⁸⁴

iii. Jesus on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:13-35)

For the Emmaus road episode (Luke 24:13-35), I focus on the resurrected Jesus’ (un)recognisability and disappearance: ‘but their eyes were being grasped (ἐκρατοῦντο) not to recognise him... but their eyes were opened (διηνοίχθησαν) and they recognised him. And he became vanished from them (καὶ αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ’ αὐτῶν)’ (24:16, 31). Despite symbolic readings, such as Terrien suggesting paraenetic allegories relaying Jesus’ living presence whilst visually absent in the *praeparatio evangelica* and Eucharist,⁸⁵ these details foremost depict Jesus’ conduct. Scholars frequently identify the story-form as a divine epiphany⁸⁶ or translated-human epiphany,⁸⁷ and some detect hospitality⁸⁸ or theoxenic elements.⁸⁹

⁸⁰ Godet 1890, 1:240; Caird 1985, 87; Morris 2008, 128.

⁸¹ Meyer 1884, 313; Edwards 2015, 142; Temple 1955, 234-35.

⁸² Klostermann 1929, 65.

⁸³ Busse 1978, 46.

⁸⁴ At least Pusey (1860, 197) connects Jerome’s Amos 5:16-17 comment (“so often as this word is used in Holy Scripture, in the person of God, it denotes punishment, that He would not abide among them, but would pass through and leave them” [on עָבַר; cf. Migne, *PL* 25:1049-50]), remarking that Jesus passes through their midst and leaves after speaking of benefited Gentiles.

⁸⁵ Terrien 2000, 431-34 (admitting non-allegorical material).

⁸⁶ See Frenschkowski 1995/1997, 2:225-48; Parsons 2015, 349; Jewish traditions: Gunkel 1903, 71; 1977, 193-94; Loisy 1924, 583-84; Dupont 1953, 365-66 n. 46 (but adding Eur., *Bacch.* 53-54); Alsup 1975; Zwiep 1997; Graeco-Roman traditions: Dibelius 1918, 137; both: Bultmann 1963, 286.

⁸⁷ Ehrhardt 1963; 1964; Betz 1969; Johnson 1991, 398. Jesus’ missing body might imply ancient Mediterranean immortalisation/deification (see Bickermann 1924; Hamilton 1965; Friedrich

Broader studies on Jesus' resurrection, post-mortem appearances, ascension/assumption, or afterlife incidentally treat imperception or disappearance.⁹⁰ Critics often attribute Jesus' unrecognisability, (dis)appearances (comparing Apollonius), or physical transcendence to resurrected traits,⁹¹ occasionally appealing to the Longer Ending of Mark (LEM/Mark 16:9-20) where Jesus is 'in another form' (ἐν ἑτέρῳ μορφῇ, 16:12).⁹² However, LEM is a later appendage⁹³ and early reception of Luke's account, not the product of earlier shared traditions.⁹⁴

A difficulty with interpreting the (im)perception is how to conceive ἐκρατοῦντο (Luke 24:16) and διηνοίχθησαν (24:31a). Commentators often infer (so-called) 'divine/theological passives' implying supernatural activity.⁹⁵ Interpreters attribute restraint to God,⁹⁶ Jesus,⁹⁷ or other power.⁹⁸ Others assign imperception to the disciples' mentality or incredulity ('spiritual blindness' or unexpectedness).⁹⁹

1973; Talbert 1975, 421-25; Dahl 1991, 118-20; Miller 2010; 2015; Litwa 2014, 141-79; cf. Lohfink 1971, 46-47).

⁸⁸ Koenig 1985, 85-116; Green 1997, 843; Byrne 2000, 165-68.

⁸⁹ McBride 1991; Nolland 1989-1993, 3:1201, 3:1205; Denaux 1999, 274-75; 2005; Arterbury 2005, 146; McMahan 2008; Jipp 2013, 194-204, 234-35.

⁹⁰ E.g., Alsup 1975; Zwiep 1997; Lukan afterlife studies attribute Jesus' post-mortem phenomena to new bodily properties/abilities: Lehtipuu 2007, 223-30; Somov 2017, 139.

⁹¹ Johnson 1991, 398, 405; van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000, 189-235; Spencer 2008, 214; Miller 2015, 173; Litwa 2019, 179-86. Apollonius traditions may be dependent on Luke 24 (Alsup 1975, 232).

⁹² Godet 1890, 2:353; Plummer 1922, 55. Others remain sceptical: Marshall 1978, 893, 898; Nolland 1989-1993, 3:1201; Parsons 2015, 351.

⁹³ I take 16:8 as the oldest ending (see NA²⁸, 175-76; Kelhoffer 2001; cf. Farmer 1974; Cox 1993; Metzger 1994, 102-107; *pace* Stein 2008; Lunn 2014).

⁹⁴ *Pace* Hug 1978; with Marshall 1978, 889; Kelhoffer 2000; cf. Alsup 1975, 86-87, 194-96; Moore 2019.

⁹⁵ So Dupont 1953, 365; Ellis 1966, 276-77; Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 2:1563-68; Edwards 2015, 716-17, 724; Parsons 2015, 349. History and limitations of the so-called '*passivum divinum/theologicum*' (a circumlocution for God; see Zerwick 1963, §236) are offered by Sidebottom 1976; Reiser 1997, 266-73; Smit and Renssen (2014) advocate its disuse, highlighting agentless or other functions; Pascut (2012) considers passives implying Jesus' actions in Mark.

⁹⁶ Loisy 1924, 574-81; Wanke 1973, 35; Marshall 1978, 893; Danker 1988, 391; Klein 2006, 729; Morris 2008, 356-59.

⁹⁷ C.F. Evans 1990, 905, 913-14.

⁹⁸ Eckey 2004/2006, 2:976, 981 (ἐκρατοῦντο: "*teufliche Macht*" [cf. Luke 22:53]; διηνοίχθησαν: God); Nolland 1989-1993, 3:1201-1208 (Satanic; cf. Luke 18:34).

⁹⁹ Caird 1985, 257-58; Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:282-83; Green 1997, 845-50; Wolter 2016, 2:550-59.

Most scholars suggest a combination: another form and mentality;¹⁰⁰ another form and restraint;¹⁰¹ mentality and restraint;¹⁰² or all these.¹⁰³ Bucur's proposal of Jesus' invisible luminosity insufficiently accounts for recognisability by other unglorified disciples, among other difficulties.¹⁰⁴ The reader identifying a 'recognition-scene' (ἀναγνώρισις) in Luke 24:30-31a,¹⁰⁵ such as Odysseus by Laertes (Hom., *Od.* 24.216-361; so MacDonald)¹⁰⁶ or Telemachus, Eurycleia, and Penelope (13.185-23.296; so Bovon),¹⁰⁷ does not explain prolonged imperception of the disciples' familiar master. My assessment of disguised visitation and supernatural control analogues will elucidate this enigma and how Jesus' unrecognisability is attributable to Jesus' preternatural activity.

Regarding Jesus' departure (Luke 24:31b), some commentators suppose that he exits naturally, exploiting the disciples' amazement.¹⁰⁸ Most scholars understand a supernatural departure, but uncritically repeat listed parallels without exploring comparability (2 Macc 3:34; T. Ab. [A] 8:1; Eur., *Hel.* 605-606; *Orest.* 1494-96; Verg., *Aen.* 9.656-60).¹⁰⁹ Lohfink (interested in the ascension) posits that unlike other NT Gospels, recording departures concluding appearances is characteristically Lukan (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33; 24:31; Acts 10:7; 12:10), but his assembled examples of angels, gods, and humans departing reflexively or passively implies (false) homogeneity.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Cook listing Luke 24:31b 'disappearance' parallels

¹⁰⁰ Van Oosterzee 1868, 390-91; Geldenhuys 1988, 632-35.

¹⁰¹ Meyer 1884, 576-80; Betz 1969, 34-35; Bock 1994/1996, 2:1909-1934.

¹⁰² Wanke 1973, 35; Marshall 1978, 893-98; Nolland 1989-1993, 3:1201-1208; Bovon 2002-2013, 3:372-75; Levine and Witherington 2018, 656.

¹⁰³ Godet 1890, 2:353-55; Plummer 1922, 552-57; Klostermann 1929, 235-38.

¹⁰⁴ Bucur 2014; 2019, 6-41.

¹⁰⁵ See Dodd 1955, 13-14, 18, 34 (admitting that this is not entirely commensurate [cf. Nuttall 1978, 9]); Nolland 1989-1993, 3:1201; Kurz 1993, 70; McMahan 2008; Taylor 2014; cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 1454b-1455a.

¹⁰⁶ MacDonald 2000b.

¹⁰⁷ Bovon 2002-2013, 3:372.

¹⁰⁸ Van Oosterzee 1868, 392 (stressing ἀπ' αὐτῶν not αὐτοῖς). For Denaux (2010, 295 n. 60), ἄφαντος with ἀπ' αὐτῶν implies invisibility.

¹⁰⁹ Klostermann 1929, 238; Creed 1957, 297; Grundmann 1966, 447; Marshall 1978, 898; Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 2:1568; Danker 1988, 394; Bock 1994/1996, 2:1920 n. 23; Eckey 2004/2006, 2:982; Wolter 2016, 2:559.

¹¹⁰ Lohfink 1971, 150-51, 170-71 nn. 17-18, 278-84.

conflates typologies, including pre- and post-mortem translations.¹¹¹ Alsup observes that Graeco-Roman missing figure accounts explain locality and continued existence whereas Jesus' disappearance concludes a recognition-scene.¹¹² Alsup excludes dreams/visions and apparitional encounters, but curiously omits Graeco-Roman (divine) 'epiphanies' despite including Jewish 'theophanies' in an 'appearance *Gattung*'.¹¹³ Nuancing disappearances is crucial¹¹⁴ and exploring afresh their comparability will refine conceptualisations of Jesus' Emmaus departure.

iv. Jesus on the Damascus Road (Acts 9; 22; 26)

To examine how the Damascus road encounter (narrated: Acts 9:1-19a; recounted by Paul: 22:6-16; 26:12-18)¹¹⁵ contributes to elusiveness, I attend to Jesus' activity and its effects: luminous manifestation toppling adversaries (9:3-4, 6, 8; 22:6-7, 10; 26:13-14, 16); cryptically disclosed identity (9:4-6; 22:7-10; 26:14-18); Paul's blindness (9:8-9; 22:11; cf. 26:18); and the companions' (im)perception (9:7; 22:9; cf. 26:13). For Terrien, the encounter continues OT epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs and God's presence through prophetic visions.¹¹⁶ Churchill determines that Jesus' manifestation fits 'divine initiative' rather than 'divine response' (human-initiated) epiphanies, characterising him as divine and uniquely related to God.¹¹⁷ However, Churchill uses 'divine' exclusively for Yahweh and restricts his study by minimising non-Jewish epiphanies in a short appendix.¹¹⁸ Actually, the reader might think of 'lightning epiphanies' common in Greek foundation myths involving divine

¹¹¹ Cook 2018, 608, cf. 322-412.

¹¹² Alsup 1975, 238-39.

¹¹³ Alsup 1975, 216-21.

¹¹⁴ ἄφαντος is a NT *hapax legomenon* (Luke 24:31b). Alexander's (1995, 115) caution against over-reliance on word-searches is pertinent.

¹¹⁵ For summaries on the variances see Clark 2001, 150-65; Marguerat 2004, 179-204; Churchill 2010, 218-22. Witherup (1992) attributes discrepancies to functional redundancy/repetition involving expansion/addition, truncation/ellipsis, changed order, and substitution, additional to point of view in different (apologetic) contexts; cf. Kurz 1993, 26-27. Σαῦλος (Aramaic name) occurs from 7:58 until 13:9 when Παῦλος (Greek name) is used as his Gentile mission begins, except in Damascus road retellings (Marguerat 2004, 179 n. 2). I use these interchangeably.

¹¹⁶ Terrien 2000, 434-40, cf. 63-105, 227-77.

¹¹⁷ Churchill 2010.

¹¹⁸ Churchill 2010, 23 n. 185, 258-59.

intervention,¹¹⁹ and MacDonald argues for imitated Dionysian epiphanies (Eur., *Bacch.* 555, 585-95, 794-96, 1078-83, 1111-13, 1118-21).¹²⁰

My analysis will attend more to effects of ancient Mediterranean luminous epiphanies to elucidate the cause of Paul's blinding, especially since his companions' sight remains intact, a significant but overlooked incongruity.¹²¹ Wikenhauser raises several purported analogues of selective/partial (im)perceptibility and toppling during epiphanies, though without comparative analyses.¹²² Critiquing and expanding such parallels and considering supernatural control traditions will better explain how the ancient reader conceptualised the encounter. Comparing this encounter with other Lukan Christophanies to Paul (18:9-10; 22:17-21; 23:10-11; cf. 16:6-7), eschatological representations (Luke 9:28-36; 17:24; 21:27; 24:26), and visions of Stephen (Acts 7:55-60) and Ananias (9:10-16) will provide additional insights.

v. Other Characters and Events

As aforementioned, Jesus' elusiveness may be compared with other characters and events in Luke-Acts, such as Paul's hostility evasions and survivals, incarceration deliverances, the Philip-eunuch story, efficacious apostolic proclamations, and angelic activity. Although I address pertinent research on these passages later in this thesis, Strelan's study of 'strange acts' is worth mentioning here.¹²³ Among peculiar events such as the ascension, the Spirit's activity, and visions, Strelan examines the Damascus road encounter, Paul's survivals, the Philip-eunuch story, incarceration deliverances, and angelic activity, determining that these bolster the Gentile mission. We shall see how these may be reconceptualised as part of a broad elusiveness theme extending from Luke's Gospel.

¹¹⁹ So Brenk 1994.

¹²⁰ MacDonald 2015b, 52-57; 2019, 121-25.

¹²¹ Miller (2007, 196) notes that scholars gloss this incongruity, but suggests Paul's filtered/free interpretation.

¹²² Wikenhauser 1952. Labelling epiphanic figures/phenomena '(in)visible'/'(in)audible' depends on the perspective of (im)perception. I employ 'selective' for exclusive witness and 'partial' for only visual/audial witness.

¹²³ Strelan 2004.

1.2. Reassessing Lukan Christology and Concepts of Divinity

Having established the basis for a critical reconceptualisation of some substantial material in Luke-Acts in terms of a Lukan compositional interest in elusiveness for portraying Jesus and for thematic purposes to be explored in this thesis, I now offer some preliminary remarks on Lukan Christology. Investigating elusiveness will not generate a ‘controlling’ Christology of Luke-Acts (a unified, coherent, and overall schematic portrait of christological descriptions),¹²⁴ but will contribute insights to Christologies already recognised (suffering and royal-Davidic Messiah; Son of God) and less stressed (divine visitor, judge, Wisdom) in Lukan scholarship. Moreover, situating my investigation within the present contours of NT Christology scholarship, which formulates complex ancient conceptualisations of ‘divine’ and ‘God’ (described below), I assess the best descriptors for understanding Jesus’ divinity within an ancient Mediterranean context. Ultimately, we shall discover in this thesis how the Lukan Jesus’ elusiveness indicates his exceptionally theomorphic identity despite christological opacity.

It will become evident how suffering, royal-Davidic, and Son of God Christologies¹²⁵ (integral to *Geheimnis*-theories)¹²⁶ emerge with Jesus evading untimely messianic suffering and with his divine sonship recurrently surfacing in my focal episodes and related passages. Surprisingly, studies on divine visitations in Luke-Acts infrequently detail christological implications,¹²⁷ though Denaux notes that Luke subtly suggests Jesus’ divinity and identity beyond a human representative.¹²⁸ My investigation will reveal how a divine visitor Christology is sustained not only by Jesus’ Emmaus road activity, but also by his programmatic Nazareth visitation. O’Toole elaborates how Jesus is depicted as a judge of his rejectors at the parousia

¹²⁴ See Buckwalter 1996 (servant-king co-equal with God).

¹²⁵ See summaries in Buckwalter 1996, 3-24. Suffering Christology: Conzelmann 1960, 60-73, 82-83, 193-202; O’Toole 1981; 2000; associating the journey motif (besides Conzelmann): Grundmann 1959; Gill 1970; von der Osten-Sacken 1973. Davidic Christology: Bock 1987, 91-154; 1994; Strauss 1995; Miura 2007; Kirk 2016. Franklin (1975, 61-64) rightly observes that, for Luke, the suffering servant or servanthood is not strictly Isaianic, but a biblical type, especially linked to the messianic-Davidic servant or Davidic sonship (evident in Psalms).

¹²⁶ Even leading to ‘*Sohnesgeheimnis*’ theories (e.g., Bieneck 1951; Haenchen 1968, 133; Moule 1975, 240-43; Kingsbury 1983, 13-15).

¹²⁷ E.g., Byrne 2000; Arterbury 2005; Jipp 2013 (‘divine identity’, relying on Rowe 2006).

¹²⁸ Denaux 1999, 279 n. 56.

and eschaton (Luke 9:26; 11:29-32; 12:8-10, 35-48; 13:22-30; 17:20-37; 19:11-28; 20:9-19 [cf. Ps 117:22]; 21:25-36; Acts 10:42; 17:31).¹²⁹ Similarly seeing an eschatological role are Conzelmann¹³⁰ and Marshall (the resurrection as its basis: Acts 17:31; cf. 1:4, 11).¹³¹ Others recognise the exalted Jesus as judge at God's right hand, warning of eschatological judgment (Buckwalter)¹³² or with the Spirit mediating through envoys (Strauss).¹³³ We shall observe how punitive theophanic traversal applied to Jesus signals judgment already at Nazareth evincing a judge Christology. Although NT Gospels and other early Christian texts reflect Jesus-Wisdom associations,¹³⁴ Green and Bovon, concerned about implications of pre-existence, remain sceptical of a Lukan Wisdom Christology.¹³⁵ However, as we shall find, Jesus depicted as elusive Wisdom in the childhood story, and subtly in the Nazareth and Emmaus pericopae, supports an implicit Wisdom Christology.

My considerations must be situated within NT Christology scholarship on early conceptualisations of Jesus' 'divinity' within monotheism.¹³⁶ Ancient descriptions of humans as 'divine'¹³⁷ due to their origins, numinous offices, or supernatural feats led Bieler and others to posit a 'θεῖος ἀνὴρ/ἄνθρωπος concept',¹³⁸ often applied to Jesus,¹³⁹ whereas others remained doubtful of any such ancient

¹²⁹ O'Toole 2008, 148-53, 173-74, 193-94; also Akagi 2019.

¹³⁰ Conzelmann 1960, 176, 184, cf. 102-103, 111.

¹³¹ Marshall 1988, 175-79.

¹³² Buckwalter 1996, 215-28, 280.

¹³³ Strauss 1995, 201-202.

¹³⁴ Christ 1970; Jacobson 1978; Kloppenborg 1978.

¹³⁵ Green 1997, 475 n. 84; Bovon 2006, 179 n. 48.

¹³⁶ See surveys: Chester 2011; Smith 2019. Israelite monotheism developed (Smith 2001; 2002, 182-99), so pre-NT biblical texts retain pluralist elements of divine unity (Römer 2015, 234). I eschew 'high(er)''-low(er)' christological descriptors inconveniently favouring vertical and hierarchical conceptualisations (Hill 2015, 24-27) which "...are theologically clumsy blunt instruments that fail to reckon with the complexity of the texts" (Hays 2016, 224).

¹³⁷ E.g., θεῖος, θεοειδής, θεοεἰκελος, θεσπέσιος, ισόθεος, ἀντίθεος, δαιμόνιος; equality/likeness terminology (ἴσος, εἰκοια, ἐπιεἰκελος, ἐναλίγκιος, ἀτάλαντος) with θεός, ἀθάνατος, or δαιμόνιον.

¹³⁸ Bieler 1967; following Wetter 1916; Weinreich 1926; Windisch 1934.

¹³⁹ With variation: Betz 1961, 100-43; 1968; 1983; Georgi 1964; Luz 1965, 9-30 ('*Wundergeheimnis*'); Fuller 1965, 68-72, 97-98, 227-29; Schweizer 1965 (connecting the *Messiasgeheimnis*); Hahn 1969, 288-99, 321 n. 57 ('Son of God' superseding); Achtemeier 1972a; 1972b; Alsup 1975, 215-39; Corrington 1986; Theissen 2007, 265-76 (Hellenistic euhemerism); Fletcher-Louis 1997, 173-84.

category.¹⁴⁰ Litwa stresses that ancient ‘divine’/‘godlike’ ascriptions describe general piety or grandeur (even salt: Hom., *Il.* 9.214), such as Homeric heroes for their superior qualities or feats which are superlative for Olympian θεοί/ἠθάνατοι possessing immortality, great or ruling power (kingship), and superhuman abilities.¹⁴¹ Therefore, referring to Jesus as ‘divine’ requires qualification and is alone insufficient for elucidating christological niceties.

Bauckham promotes a Jewish creator-creation dichotomy with Jesus sharing the unique ‘divine’ identity of the one creator God, including his cosmic throne (universal sovereign rule), responsibilities, and functions.¹⁴² For Bauckham, ‘divine identity’ includes ‘personifications’/‘hypostatizations’ such as the Spirit, Word/Logos, and Wisdom.¹⁴³ Dunn rightly sees these representing God’s activity and self-revelation, not as semi-divine/semi-independent intermediaries, and takes related Christologies as expressing divine immanence embodied in or revealed through Jesus.¹⁴⁴ Henrichs-Tarassenkova helpfully provides an emic understanding of ‘identity’ in terms of ancient characterisation, though espousing Bauckham’s scheme influences her determination that Luke-Acts has a divine identity Christology.¹⁴⁵ Other scholars observe created figures acting in God’s roles or participating in his sovereignty (so Hurtado),¹⁴⁶ including humanity (so Kirk),¹⁴⁷ and possibly receiving

¹⁴⁰ Tiede 1972; Betz 1972; Lane 1974; Holladay 1977; Blackburn 1991; Koskenniemi 1994; 1998; Pilgaard 1995; du Toit 1997. See Morrison 2014, 174-76. Pre-Christian Apollonius or Pythagoras traditions remain questionable (see Peter Wülfing von Martitz, “υἱός, υἰοθεσία,” *TDNT* 8:338-40; Bowie 1978; Blackburn 1991, 4).

¹⁴¹ Litwa 2014, 21-23.

¹⁴² Bauckham 1998; 2008; cf. Loke 2017. Dunn (2010, 141-45; contra Bauckham) prefers language of ‘equation’ over ‘identity’.

¹⁴³ Bauckham 1998, 16-22; 2008, 16-17, 165-66, 182; cf. Gieschen 1998, 70-123 (angelomorphic divine hypostases).

¹⁴⁴ Dunn 2010, 72-84, 116-36, 141-45; cf. 1980, 168-76.

¹⁴⁵ Henrichs-Tarassenkova 2016.

¹⁴⁶ Hurtado (2003, 47 n. 66) notes the enthroned Moses (Ezek. Trag.) and Laodiceans (Rev 3:21). Nevertheless, Bauckham (2008, 166-72, 222-24) contends that such figures (also Melchizedek [11QMelch] and the Son of Man [1 En.]) do not share God’s ultimate sovereignty.

¹⁴⁷ Kirk (2016) argues for the Synoptic Jesus as an ‘idealised human’ since sharing God’s roles, rule, actions, and attributes or receiving worship are ubiquitous and not indicative of shared ontological/inherent ‘divine’ identity. Kirk’s emphasis on Jesus’ humanity is constructive, but his overstated case minimises God’s ultimate sovereignty (see Bauckham 2017).

worship/obedience/reverence in ways seemingly reserved for God.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, Hurtado contends that Bauckham’s model is not incompatible with the ancient Jewish idea of a unique “chief-agent” figure “defined with reference to God,” a descriptor most suitable for NT representations of Jesus.¹⁴⁹ My study of the Lukan Jesus’ elusiveness will further contribute to understanding his identity (Christology) in terms of characterisation, but with a model of divinity which does not insist on a sharp distinction between God and all other [created] beings, thus allowing for the possibility of distinct divine figures.

Fletcher-Louis, lauding a strict Jewish framework, contends that Jesus is portrayed as angelomorphic in Luke-Acts, and notes Jesus’ Nazareth escape as evincing earthly-life “physical transience”.¹⁵⁰ In this thesis, I apply the useful descriptor ‘physical transience’ for somatic/corporeal malleability or transcendence, but not necessarily angelomorphic. Fletcher-Louis sees the angelomorphic divine-human Jesus participating in the one supreme God’s (Yahweh’s) divine functions and identity, even worshipped and enjoying a more divine status among subordinate ‘gods’ (θεοί/אֱלֹהִים/אֱלִים) such as angels or exalted patriarchs, but not sharing Yahweh’s omnipotent status.¹⁵¹ Looking beyond a strict Jewish framework, Litwa advocates an emic consultation of indigenous Mediterranean categories to conceptualise ‘god’.¹⁵² He contends that first-century Jewish ‘monotheistic summodeism’ entails immortal, superhuman, transcendent figures (angels, ‘numina’/δαίμόνια, post-mortem patriarchs, and ‘[prime] demiurgic mediators’: Wisdom, the angel of Yahweh, Son of Man, Logos, Yahoel, or Metatron) emanating from and manifesting power of a singular, supreme deity of universal/centralised

¹⁴⁸ Alexander (2016) questions ‘creation’ and ‘worship’ exclusive to God and argues that [supreme] agency does not indicate ontology. My literary-critical approach (§1.3) marginalises engagement with historical origins or Jesus-devotional praxis.

¹⁴⁹ Hurtado 2016, 87-91.

¹⁵⁰ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 70 n. 187.

¹⁵¹ Fletcher-Louis 1997; 2015, 293-316. On angelomorphism see Daniélou 1964, 117-46; Stuckenbruck 1995; 2004; Gieschen 1998; Hannah 1999; Chester 2007; Orlov 2009; also proposals that a [heretical/sectarian] Jewish ‘Two Powers theology’ facilitated or included worship of Jesus as a deified human or angelic mediator (Segal 1977; Boyarin 2010; Davila 1999; cf. Barker 1992; 1999).

¹⁵² Litwa 2012, 37-55. Although Litwa (2012) discusses this model in relation to Pauline theology, it pertains to other early Christian conceptualisations (cf. Litwa 2014). Litwa (2014, 13, 41, 123, 177 n. 128, 216) contends against the all-too-common Judaism-Hellenism divide; see also Hengel 1977; 1989; 1996; 2010; contributions in Engberg-Pedersen 2001; Aitken and Paget 2014.

omnipotence (Yahweh) as the summit of the class ‘God’.¹⁵³ For Litwa, applications of divinity (‘deification’) intimately associate Jesus with this singular, omnipotent deity.¹⁵⁴

Although Fletcher-Louis occasionally speaks of attributes as also ‘theomorphic’,¹⁵⁵ I employ ‘theomorphism’ (‘form of God’) for ‘divine’/‘deified’ (not strictly physical, but functional and/or ontological) traits in agreement with Litwa’s model, though following Dunn in seeing Wisdom, Word/Logos, and Spirit as metaphorical expressions of God’s creative (inter)activity and self-revelation, not independent hypostatizations or demiurgic intermediaries. Thus, supramundane figures are theomorphic to varying degrees, as are humans to some extent already from creation (Gen 1:26-27; 3:5, 22; 9:6) with the potential for additional theomorphic depictions or ascriptions.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, whereas angelomorphism is strictly Jewish, theomorphism is more inclusive of ancient Mediterranean influences and notions.¹⁵⁷ Since angelomorphism is a derived subtype of theomorphism,¹⁵⁸ angelomorphic depictions or attributes are essentially theomorphic. Luke-Acts is ultimately vague about Jesus’ metaphysical ontology relative to ὁ θεός/πατήρ,¹⁵⁹ so I

¹⁵³ Litwa 2012, 37-55, 229-57. For ‘summodeism’ see Wentz 2001; Assmann 2008, 53. This differs from ‘henotheism’ (unity of all deities in one), ‘megatheism’ (elevation or superiority of one deity), and ‘monolatry’ (worship of one deity without necessarily denying others) (see Belayche 2010; Chaniotis 2010). Although Smith (2008, 168-74, 246, 300, 321-22) differentiates summodeism and monotheism, Litwa (2012, 242-44) argues that subordinate gods wield power and share in the deity fully possessed by the omnipotent, primal, high God Yahweh without competition or depletion, outside whom are no divine beings/powers. Sommer (2009, 145-48) similarly defines ‘monotheism’.

¹⁵⁴ Litwa 2014, 1-35.

¹⁵⁵ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 227, 229 (lightning); 2002, 53 (Noah’s birth: 1 En. 106; 1QapGen 2-5), 395 (the righteous). Cf. 2 Cor 11:14. DeConick (2007, 1) includes ‘theomorphism’ among (ambiguous) scholarly language avoiding ‘high’-‘low’ christological terminology.

¹⁵⁶ Similarly, Litwa 2012, 98-100, 283.

¹⁵⁷ Yarbro Collins (2007, 55-56, 387 n. 8) notes that ruler-cult ideologies already influenced messianism (following Horbury 1998, 68-77), and Gentile predominance generated more non-Jewish ideas shaping Christologies.

¹⁵⁸ Fletcher-Louis (2015, 168 n. 1) later writes, “...when we consider all the sources and evidence, angelic categories are not nearly as historically important as one might judge from my *Luke-Acts*. Where they do figure prominently, they are a subsidiary and component part of larger, more widespread categories”.

¹⁵⁹ Both share the identity of ὁ κύριος (Rowe 2006; O’Toole 2008, 5, 181-230). Nevertheless, numerous scholars detect subordination, especially pre-resurrection (Braun 1952; Conzelmann 1960; Franklin 1970; 1975, 48-76; 1994, 274-78; Stählin 1973, 241-42; Zwief 1997, 197-98; Strauss 1995; Tuckett 1999). Against subordination see Smalley 1962 (contra adoptionism); 1973; Bock 1987; Buckwalter 1996.

employ ‘divine’/‘deified’ terminology commensurate with theomorphism, retaining this conundrum.

Foster determines that embryonic NT polymorphic Christology was adapted into docetic texts depicting Jesus’ material transcendence, and into proto-orthodox texts depicting his (higher) resurrected existence free from mortal constraints.¹⁶⁰ He does not find polymorphism conspicuous in NT pre-resurrection passages (hostility evasions: Luke 4:30; John 8:59; transfiguration: Mark 9:2-9//Matthew 17:1-8//Luke 9:28-36) or post-resurrection passages (Emmaus road: Luke 24:13-35; cf. Mark 16:12-13; closed-room appearances: Luke 24:36-37; John 20:19; Mark 16:14; Damascus road: Acts 9:1-9; 22:3-16; 26:9-18; Patmos vision: Rev 1:9-20), but determines that Jesus’ bodily properties change at his resurrection.¹⁶¹ My investigation of Jesus’ elusiveness will indicate more continuity of physical transience and transcendence between his life and afterlife. Gathercole sees several depictions in the Synoptics indicating the pre- and post-resurrected Jesus’ ‘heavenly identity’ by ‘transcending’ the heaven-earth and God-creation divides and space, ultimately arguing for these as supporting Jesus’ pre-existence.¹⁶² Although inferring pre-existence in the Synoptics remains questionable,¹⁶³ my study will extend Gathercole’s supporting observations by offering additional examples of Jesus’ pre- and post-mortem transcendence suggesting his exceptionally theomorphic identity.

1.3. Methodology and Plan of Research

1.3.1. Eclectic Literary-Critical Methodology for Research

I use an eclectic literary-critical methodology to investigate elusiveness in Luke-Acts, exploring its significance for Lukan composition and Christology. In what follows, I discuss how this method’s core utilises aspects of approaches for analysing texts, principally narrative criticism and characterisation, together with aspects of reader-oriented criticism to account for the reading process and extratextual-informed readings. Inherent to these approaches are intratextual and intertextual dynamics.

¹⁶⁰ Foster 2007.

¹⁶¹ Foster 2007, 68-77 (aside from transformation and light evincing metamorphosis at the transfiguration).

¹⁶² Gathercole 2006, 46-79.

¹⁶³ See Yarbro Collins and Collins 2008, 123-26.

Additionally, I detail the ancient Mediterranean framework and sources for this project.

My investigation of Jesus' character portrayal and Lukan thematic interests positions this study within narrative criticism. Some forms of narrative criticism may not look much outside a text's whole and final form to contextual data, perhaps with the exception of redaction-critical issues, but my narrative-critical approach entails a text-centred and reader-oriented balance that is both intratextual and extratextual.¹⁶⁴ Although Luke's reader encountered Jesus traditions (Luke 1:1-4),¹⁶⁵ nothing in Luke-Acts implies that the reader should be a redaction critic.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the reader would certainly draw from contexts and data outside the text in making sense of it. As delineated above, I consider my focal episodes along with their co-texts holistically in the light of Luke-Acts, especially narrative correspondences. A narrative-critical investigation neither restricted to intratextuality nor fixated on Lukan editorial activity is most useful and more realistic of the ancient reader's textual interaction.¹⁶⁷ This balance is important for characterisation.

Ascertaining Lukan Christology, entailing facets of Jesus' person and activities, is to characterise Jesus.¹⁶⁸ Whereas characterisation occurs by trait ascription, character-building/portraiture occurs from accumulating progressively ascribed, complex, and recurring traits.¹⁶⁹ These are done both 'directly' with names, titles, or appearances, among other traits, and 'indirectly' with, *inter alia*, actions, activities, speech, thoughts, intentions, feelings, or other characters' reactions or speech and with character comparisons or parallels (explicit or evoked).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ See Moore 1989; 1994; Powell 1990; Merenlahti and Hakola 1999; Rhoads 1999; Merenlahti 2005; Resseguie 2005; on reader-response criticism: Resseguie 1984 (Gospels); Malina 1991 (Luke-Acts).

¹⁶⁵ Alexander 1993, 136-42, 191-93.

¹⁶⁶ Darr 1992, 26-29. Nonetheless, I peripherally address redactional, textual, and other biblical-critical issues.

¹⁶⁷ Similarly, O'Toole 2008, 3-4 (using composition criticism).

¹⁶⁸ 'Narrative Christology' emphasises the reading process and characterisation over titular factors (Tannehill 1979; Denaux 2005; Rowe 2006; Malbon 2009; Dinkler 2017a). 'Figural Christology' attends more to intertextuality (Hays 2014; cf. 2016).

¹⁶⁹ Margolin 1986, 205; cf. Bal 2017, 113-14.

¹⁷⁰ With differing terminology and indicators: Springer 1978, 11-44; Booth 1983, 3-20; Rimmon-Kenan 2002, 61-72; cf. Phelan 1996, 29-30; biblical studies: Alter 1981, 116-17; Berlin 1983, 33-42; Sternberg 1985, 321-64; Darr 1992, 43-45; Bar-Efrat 2000, 47-92; cf. 1980.

Indirectness is most useful for assessing elusiveness depictions and is intrinsic to comparisons within Luke-Acts, revealing whether Jesus' conduct is qualitatively or functionally distinguishable. Character personality/narrative identity and actions are mutually implicative—character is ascertained by actions, and actions illustrate character.¹⁷¹ Thus, I regularly discern actional roles—whether characters are subjects of actions affecting others (active), subject-affected performers of actions (reflexive), or (in)direct recipients affected by others' actions (passive)—ultimately determined not by grammatical voice, but at the discourse level.¹⁷²

Intratextuality, namely correspondences and features within texts (e.g., previews/prolepses, reviews/analepses, themes, echoes, parallels, patterns, repetitions, and type-scenes),¹⁷³ is inherent to my analyses of character and thematic coherence, linking not only instances of Jesus' elusiveness, but also other elusive characters and events. Talbert and others observe that a single author consciously creates intricate parallels and patterns in Luke-Acts recognisably evoking comparison between characters and events.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, highlighting intratextual features contributing to Jesus' character and a theme relevant to my *topos* will be important.

These text-oriented approaches benefit from integrated reader-oriented aspects. Lukan narrative is admittedly designed to convince the reader to affirm and to adopt beliefs about characters and events (Luke 1:1-4; cf. Acts 1:1-2; similarly John 20:31).¹⁷⁵ Following Darr, I utilise a constructed reader as a heuristic device, based on data from Luke-Acts and accessible in the wider first-century Mediterranean world.¹⁷⁶ This reader, whether identified with a certain 'Theophilus' (Luke 1:3; Acts

¹⁷¹ See Margolin 1983, 6; Rimmon-Kenan 2002, 31-36; Gerrig 2010; de Temmerman 2010 33-34 (in Graeco-Roman hermeneutics); narrative identity: Frei 1986; 1997; Ricoeur 1990; 1992; Rowe 2006, 17-23; Henrichs-Tarasenkova 2016, 43-55.

¹⁷² See n. 69.

¹⁷³ See Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:1-9; cf. Brawley 1990b; Kurz 1993.

¹⁷⁴ Talbert 1974, 15-88; Muhlack 1979; Clark 2001; McComiskey 2004.

¹⁷⁵ Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:4, 8; Parsons 2014, 40-50; Dinkler 2016, 215; cf. 2013.

¹⁷⁶ Darr 1992, 20-29; 1993, 47-48; 1998. I see the text possessing inherent stability and authority in guiding the implied reader who creates meaning and constructs characters 'with the text', filling narrative 'indeterminacies' (Iser 1971; 1972; 1974; 1978; cf. Fish 1972; 1980; 1997; Chatman 1978, 121-30; Rabinowitz 1987, 148-53; biblical studies: Alter 1981, 114-30; Burnett 1993; Darr 1992, 17-30; 1993; 1998, 22-54; Merenlahti 1999; 2005, 79-82) rather than ascribing more authority to an inscribed reader 'in the text' (e.g., Prince 1973; 1980; 1982; Genette 1980) or a more subjective reader 'over the text' (e.g., Holland 1973; 1975; Bleich 1975) (on these see Mailloux 1977; 1979; Resseguie 2016, 7-11). Text and reader are mutually engaging, interactive agents (see Dinkler 2019a; enactivist cognitive narratology: Popova 2014; Caracciolo 2014).

1:1), is a first-century ‘culturally literate’ adult with general knowledge about history, politics, geography, and people within the Roman Empire, and with more specific knowledge about ancient literature (detailed below).¹⁷⁷ Modifying Darr’s sketch of a first-time, sequential reader, I employ a re-reader conscious of broader Lukan narratives, capable of revising interpretations.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, this reader is aware of Jesus traditions and theological instructions, as Luke’s Gospel preface discloses.

Ascertaining the reader’s shared conventions with the text, namely their ‘extratextual repertoire’/‘extratext’ that they consult for data from their world, is vital for developing the reader’s profile and readings.¹⁷⁹ Darr summarises the extratext as comprising a competent reader’s familiarity with pertinent data:

(1) language; (2) social norms and cultural scripts; (3) classical or canonical literature; (4) literary conventions (e.g., genres, type scenes, standard plots, stock characters) and reading rules (e.g., how to categorize, rank, and process various kinds of textual data); and (4) commonly-known historical and geographical facts.¹⁸⁰

The text-guided reader generates intelligible meanings, recognising extratextual signifiers and associating resemblances.¹⁸¹ Although different readers may interpret a single action or event differently,¹⁸² textual features serve as boundaries, guiding extratextual associations and delimiting interpretive judgments.¹⁸³ A reader’s incompatible postulates of a single ambiguous narrative may coexist due to artistic

¹⁷⁷ Darr 1992, 26-29; 1998, 54-63. Luke and Acts were probably intended for wider audiences given preservation and distribution (Downing 1995).

¹⁷⁸ Green (1995, 73-74 n. 36; 1997, 307 n. 77) critiques Darr for minimising retrospective modification and deconstruction. See Leitch 1987 (re-reading); Richardson 2007, 226 (implied re-readers).

¹⁷⁹ Darr 1992, 21-22; 1998, 36-42, 89-103; variously labelled: Culler 1975, 131-52, 164-69; Mailloux 1982, 149-58; Prince 1982, 103-147; Rabinowitz 1987, 68-75; Kearns 1999, 165-71; Bal 2017, 108-113; Luke-Acts: Tannehill 1996, 29-30; Dinkler 2013, 28-31; 2019b.

¹⁸⁰ Darr 1992, 22; cf. 1998, 62-63.

¹⁸¹ See Eco 1979, 7-11. This involves ‘defamiliarisation’/‘recontextualisation’, possibly requiring modified assumptions or expectations to ‘build consistency’ (Iser 1974, 87, 283-88; Resseguie 1990; Darr 1992, 32).

¹⁸² Margolin 1986, 209-211.

¹⁸³ See Darr 1992, 171; Eco 1994, 6-7, 148-49; cf. Sternberg 1985, 222-29. Cognitive-stylistic specialists refer to this text-guided and extratextual reader-oriented process of character (re)construction as ‘schema(ta) theory’ (Gerrig and Allbritton 1990; Semino 1997; Schneider 2001; Culpeper 2001; 2009; Emmott et al 2014).

design.¹⁸⁴ Even Luke's reader, culturally literate with an expansive ancient Mediterranean extratext, may formulate multiple interpretations of individual passages or details which may be deliberately multivalent/polysemic (e.g., literal and figurative). Thus, I consider multiple extratextual-informed yet textual-confined readings of elusiveness in my focal episodes.

As preparation for reading my focal episodes, I establish part of the reader's extratext by compiling ancient Mediterranean literary conventions of elusiveness grouped into identifiable categories of motifs, tropes, or traditional complexes. These conventions are educed by undeveloped scholarly inferences and interpretive gaps for potential readings of my focal episodes (see §1.1.2).¹⁸⁵ Categories with both Jewish and Graeco-Roman examples include disguised or divine visitation and (in)hospitality, luminous epiphanies, reflexive disappearance, invisibility, and supernatural control.¹⁸⁶ The independent youth category is limited to Graeco-Roman thought, and categories limited to Jewish thought are divine hiddenness, elusive Wisdom, and theophanic traversal.¹⁸⁷ Formulating this extratext is not to imply that it is exhaustive or that Luke and his reader are familiar with all its data, but it represents the type of repertoire from which they draw.

Additional to Luke's theological reflection on and use of Jewish scriptural literature,¹⁸⁸ unexplained glosses of Jewish and Graeco-Roman myths, customs, legalities, philosophy, and cultic or other practices are indicative of an ancient Mediterranean framework.¹⁸⁹ For instance, he mentions [visiting] deities (Acts 14:11-14; 19:24-41; 28:1-10; 28:11), idols (15:20, 29; 17:16; 21:25), fortune-telling (16:16, 21) or other practices (19:18-19), and philosophies (17:18-34; 19:9). He also

¹⁸⁴ Sternberg 1985, 228-29; Rimmon-Kenan 1982.

¹⁸⁵ Admittedly with a degree of circularity necessary in the process of hypothesising and investigating (cf. Darr 1998, 97 n. 10).

¹⁸⁶ To be sure, supernatural control is not always elusive, but is often conducted for elusiveness and/or indicates elusive character.

¹⁸⁷ Since I focus on Jesus' character and select episodes, I engage with extratextual data for non-focal passages without dedicated categories in Chapters 2-3.

¹⁸⁸ Bovon 2006, 106-117, 525-31; Cowan 2019.

¹⁸⁹ E.g., Jewish: circumcision, purity, ablutions, dietary legalities, sabbatical or synagogal customs, prayer, priestly practices, and tithing. On Graeco-Roman data: Aune 1988, 77-157; Kauppi 2006.

positively depicts Gentiles inclined towards Israel's God or turning from undesirable practices (10:1-4, 22, 35, 45-48; 11:18; 13:3-12, 38; 14:15; 16:9; 18:7; 26:20).¹⁹⁰

Luke and his reader draw from both culturally distinct and cross-cultural data via literary, oral, and visual media in their ancient Mediterranean milieu.¹⁹¹ NT authors may have been educated with Homer and Vergil (cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8.5)¹⁹² or at least were aware of Graeco-Roman myths, though they emphasise their scriptures and traditions over educational values reverencing such mythology.¹⁹³ Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were highly esteemed or canonical in antiquity,¹⁹⁴ occupying a central place in Graeco-Roman literary educational curricula of Luke's time,¹⁹⁵ exegetically popular for apologetic purposes, and vehicles for articulating communal identities.¹⁹⁶ Niehoff demonstrates that Jews in Alexandria were aware of Homeric epic and hermeneutical scribal practices, even applying techniques to Jewish scriptures (cf. awareness of *Iliad* in Philo, *Contempl.* 7; *Conf.* 4-5; *Agr.* 18; *Mut.* 179; *Congr.* 74).¹⁹⁷ Regarding celebrated playwrights, Euripidean tragedies enjoyed more widespread attention than those of Aeschylus and Sophocles, including in education, evident by papyri numbers, literary influence, and scholastic material, even in Roman times.¹⁹⁸

I use 'Jewish literature' to mean the OT corpus (OG supplemented with HB), OT Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha (OTP&A), Qumran and other Semitic texts (e.g.,

¹⁹⁰ See also Oakes 2005, 86-88. Gentile Christians learned about 'Moses'/torah (15:19-29) and Paul models affluent knowledge of non-Jewish philosophical traditions (17:28). I use 'Christian(ity)'/church' for conceptual or actual, historical or literary, heterogeneous Jesus-followers (cf. Acts 9:31; 11:26; 15:22).

¹⁹¹ Including universal data from non-distinct sources (cf. Hogan 2014; Eco 1979, 17-27).

¹⁹² Sandnes 2005, 716-17; see also MacDonald 2000a, 8; 2015c, 1-4; Glockmann (1968) is cautious.

¹⁹³ Sandnes 2009.

¹⁹⁴ Regarding the 'Homeric Question', I treat these poems as 'Homeric' insofar as they were composed ca. eighth century BCE, reflect similar thought and style, and were often received as related, even if not attributable to a single composer or historical Homer. The *Iliad* was copied more than the *Odyssey* by a ratio of at least 2:1 (Haslam, 1997, 56, 60-61; cf. Bird 2010, 1-2; Kim 2010); numbers and catalogued witnesses in: Allen 1979, 1:11-55; West 2001, 86-157.

¹⁹⁵ Marrou 1982; Bonner 1977; Alexander 1995, 114; 2005, 170; Criboire 1996 (papyri and ostraca from Egypt); Morgan 1998; Hock 2001.

¹⁹⁶ Finkelberg 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Niehoff 2007; 2011, 2-3; 2012.

¹⁹⁸ Bonner 1977, 172, 214-15; Marrou 1982, 188; Morgan 1998.

targumim), Philo, Josephus, and rabbinic writings.¹⁹⁹ For ‘Graeco-Roman literature’, I include Greek and Roman writings up to the mid-Roman Imperial period (ca. third century CE) to allow texts reflecting earlier traditions or demonstrating early reception. I am particularly attentive to Homeric epic and Euripidean tragedy (principally the *Bacchae*) given their popularity, influence,²⁰⁰ and concentrated elusiveness. I include *PGM* and Philostratus’ *Vita Apollonii* due to scholars’ invocations of these with my focal episodes, despite later dates and apparent Christian influences. I remain cognisant of Christian influences in my sources, and I occasionally include early Christian examples to consider ancient interpretations or reception. All these sources offer comparative material for elusiveness within the milieu of Luke-Acts and the reader.

Considering intertextuality is inherent to my analyses of the reader’s extratextual-informed and text-guided readings of elusiveness.²⁰¹ I consider potential intertextual modes,²⁰² aiming for a balanced approach avoiding both ‘parallelomania’²⁰³ and undue scepticism. Views of Lukan intertextuality of Homeric epic or Euripides’ *Bacchae* range from maximalist²⁰⁴ to more cautious positions.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ For Luke, Jewish texts follow some traditional sequence of ‘Law’ (assumed Mosaic authorship), ‘Prophets’, and ‘Writings’ (Luke 2:22; 5:14; 16:29-31; 20:28, 37; 24:27, 44; Acts 3:22; 6:11-14; 13:39; 15:1-21; 21:21; 26:22; 28:23).

²⁰⁰ In education see Hengel 1996, 58-106, 198. The theoxenic trope in these influenced other uses (Jipp 2013, 60-95).

²⁰¹ E.g., allusions, echoes, or mimesis/*imitatio*; see devices in Herman et al 2005; history of intertextual research in Allen 2011; varying explanations and views in Oropeza and Moyise 2016; Allen and Smith 2020. Robbins (1996, 30-33 [32]) includes “cultural, social and historical phenomena”. Litwak (2005, 48-55) includes genre and tradition echoes in Luke-Acts. Intertextuality involves textual or other source relationships, is not limited to philological evidence, and includes accidental confluence or unconscious evocation mistaken as deliberate (Finkelpearl 2001, 78-90).

²⁰² Rather than conducting genealogical comparative analyses to establish antecedents, my considerations are more analogical, though open to potential relationships (cf. Smith 1990, 46-53).

²⁰³ See Sandmel 1962.

²⁰⁴ Homeric epic: Bonz (2000) sees Luke-Acts imitating foundational epic genre (LXX, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*) (critiqued by Krauter 2009); MacDonald (2015a; 2015b; 2016a; 2019; cf. 1994; 1999; 2000a; 2001; 2003; 2015c; 2016b) maintains that Luke retains Markan Homeric mimesis whilst imitating Homer, *Homeric Hymns*, Plato (*Phaedo* in Luke; *Republic* and *Apology* in Acts), Xenophon, and Euripides (*Bacchae* mostly in Acts; *Phoenissae* in Luke), among other sources. MacDonald minimises intertextuality of the OT (Sandnes 2005, 731). Euripides’ *Bacchae*: Moles 2006; MacDonald 2015b; 2019.

²⁰⁵ Homeric epic: Robbins (1978; 2018, 82-113) sees ‘we-passages’ (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16) as common ancient Mediterranean epic sea-voyage language (cf. Praeder 1984a); Alexander (2005, 165-82) acknowledges a Homeric echo in Acts 27:2-5, 41 (ἐπέκειλαν τὴν ναῦν) without imitation. Euripides’ *Bacchae*: Vögeli 1953; Hackett 1956; Bremmer 2008a, 229.

Although intertextual investigations of the *Bacchae* tend to focus on Acts rather than the Gospel, a notable exception is MacDonald who maintains that Luke's first volume occasionally mimics the *Bacchae*, such as Jesus' women followers imitating maenads (Luke 8:1-3) or Zacchaeus imitating Pentheus (Luke 19:1-10; *Bacch.* 802-1136).²⁰⁶ Bilby expands these, suggesting that Luke (akin to Marcion's Gospel) emulates the *Bacchae* elsewhere (4:29-30; 5:1-11), followed by redacted editions on which an early John composition depended for a Dionysian Gospel, especially Jesus' evasion (Luke 4:29-30 in John 8:58b-59; 10:39).²⁰⁷ My emphasis on Dionysian myth as context for Jesus' elusiveness in both Lukan volumes contributes to such explorations. Finally, I do not marginalise potential intertextuality of Jewish literature, which is arguably more apparent or prevalent.

1.3.2. Plan and Arrangement of Research

In this chapter I tentatively proposed the portrayal of an elusive Jesus in Luke-Acts which is the primary basis for a coherent and comprehensive elusiveness theme. I identified focal episodes which are paradigmatic illustrations of Jesus' life and afterlife for concentrated analysis, namely the childhood story, Nazareth pericope, Emmaus road episode, and Damascus road encounter, along with other characters and events. I exposed problematic scholarly interpretations of details in these passages and identified elusiveness readings meriting investigation. I highlighted the usefulness of theomorphism for reflecting on any christological implications. I outlined an eclectic literary-critical methodology for my investigation, particularly utilising narrative-critical aspects with reader-oriented character-building, requiring attention to intratextual features and intertextual possibilities in an ancient Mediterranean milieu. My method expands similar approaches (chiefly of Darr) by offering a more realistic extratextual-informed and text-guided (re-)reader who considers multiple legitimate readings of individual passages or details.

The following chapters catalogue Graeco-Roman (Chapter 2) and Jewish (Chapter 3) literary elusiveness conventions, forming an extratextual repertoire for reading my focal episodes. For each focal episode in subsequent chapters I assess

²⁰⁶ MacDonald 2015b, 23-24, 51-52, 59-60; 2019, 73-75; cf. 2017, 112. Another exception is Dormeyer 2005, 164-65 (e.g., wine: Luke 22:14-20); followed by Ziegler 2008.

²⁰⁷ Bilby 2018 (also seeing later Luke and Acts editions dependent on later John editions).

scholarly explanations whilst specifying textual delimitations of interpretive options for critics and the reader, establishing actional roles and highlighting significant literary features, then I offer extratextual-informed readings. After presenting how the childhood story read alongside the *Telemacheia* highlights Jesus' independence and sovereignty, I demonstrate how Jesus resembles elusive Wisdom (Chapter 4). I then show how the Nazareth pericope reads as a theoxenic episode concluding with Jesus' escape imagined as invisibility/impalpability or supernatural control and recalling Jewish divine hiddenness, Wisdom, or (especially) punitive theophanic traversal (Chapter 5). I elucidate how the reader conceptualises the Emmaus road account as a theoxenic episode without Jesus' altered appearance, but with Jesus' supernatural control and reflexive immortal(ised) disappearance, perpetuating elusiveness into his afterlife (Chapter 6). I detail this continued portrayal in the Damascus road encounter as the reader attributes Jesus' luminous manifestation blinding Paul alone to selective and partial (im)perceptibility and supernatural control, especially compared with other Christophanies (Chapter 7). I then examine how the reader's intratextual comparisons advance their portraiture of a reflexive/active elusive Jesus and recognition of thematic elusiveness with the disciples' unavoidable inflictions, passive incarceration deliverances, mediation of supernatural control, and divine causality in the Philip-eunuch story (§8.1). Additionally, I find that depictions of Jesus and angels are similar in terms of (non-)luminous epiphanies, departures, and supernatural control, though Jesus' epiphanic initiative, impairing luminosity, and power of control portray him as not only angelomorphic, but exceptionally theomorphic (§8.2).

Additional to cataloguing ancient Mediterranean primary-source data for elusiveness conventions and offering several new readings of my focal episodes, I conclude by summarising and synthesising my findings and overall contributions to scholarship in terms of Lukan composition and Christology (Chapter 9). Pertaining to Lukan composition (§9.1), I identify a reasonably constructed reader-oriented portrait of the elusive Jesus and the reader's recognition of a coherent, comprehensive elusiveness theme. I determine that the extent of intertextuality concerning elusiveness phenomena in my focal episodes is primarily literary-conventional as opposed to more direct appropriations of specific texts. Moreover, I find that elusiveness serves literary and theological functions in Luke-Acts, including:

producing character and reader intrigue; implying supernatural activity; reassuring the reader about embracing and honouring Jesus whilst contemplating progressively revealed Christology; perpetuating stories by missional indomitability; and underscoring supramundane power and identity with superfluity. Finally, I conclude that the elusiveness portrait and theme contribute to several Lukan Christologies (suffering and royal-Davidic Messiah; divine visitor; judge; Wisdom; Son of God) indicating Jesus' exceptional theomorphism, intimate with though distinct from Yahweh (§9.2).

CHAPTER 2

ELUSIVENESS IN GRAECO-ROMAN LITERATURE

2.1. Ancient Greek and Roman Literary Conventions of Elusiveness

In this chapter I examine Graeco-Roman literary elusiveness conventions, partially reconstructing an ancient Mediterranean extratextual repertoire, to prepare for reading my focal Luke-Acts passages. I concentrate on disguised or divine visitation and (in)hospitality, luminous epiphanies, reflexive disappearances, invisibility, supernatural control, and youths acting independently without parental knowledge. Although several other elusiveness categories also inherent in Graeco-Roman material could be added, I particularly concentrate on these which will be most analytically helpful by shedding light upon my study of Luke-Acts. I pay particular attention to occurrences in Homer's *Odyssey* and Euripides' *Bacchae*, texts portraying elusive characters (Athene, Odysseus, and Telemachus in the *Odyssey*; Dionysus in the *Bacchae*) and reflecting elusiveness themes.

2.1.1. Disguised or Divine Visitation and (In)hospitality

When a god appears as a disguised guest (ξένοσ) to receive hospitality (ξενία), a theophany becomes a theoxeny.²⁰⁸ Heracles and the Dioscuri (Pindar, *Ol.* 3; *Nem.* 10.49-59; Paus. 4.27.2-3)²⁰⁹ or humans are also unrecognised guests, so identifying every episode as *theoxenic* is precarious.²¹⁰ 'Virtual theoxeny' is appropriate for visitation on behalf of or in the manner of gods, such as Telemachus or Odysseus in

²⁰⁸ This trope is extensively researched: Landau 1901; Rose 1956; Flückiger-Guggenheim 1984; Frenschkowski 1995/1997, 2:3-124. A θεοξένιον/*lectisternium* (cultic ritual feast) may result from a perceived divine visitation, though the relation to literary theoxenies remains unclear (cf. Paus. 7.27.9; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 9.372A; Bacchylides, *fr.* 21; see *LSJ*, s.v. "θεοξένια"; Pritchett 1979, 17-18; Jameson 1994; Petridou 2016, 289-311; Thalmann 1984, 101-103).

²⁰⁹ Flückiger-Guggenheim 1984, 62-77; Kowalzig 2009. On Heracles as human, hero, and god see Padilla 1998, 3, 14-33. The Dioscuri, whom Zeus deified (Eur., *Hel.* 205-209; Isocrates, [*Archid.*] 6.18; Verg., *Aen.* 6.121; Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 3.11.2), rotationally live in the underworld (Hom., *Od.* 11.298-304; Pindar, *Nem.* 10.55-59; *Pyth.* 11.61-64; Lucian, *Dial. d.* 25/26; Hyginus, *Fab.* 80; *Astr.* 2.22; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 23.7), less powerful than Fate and other deities (cf. Eur., *Hel.* 1642-79; Paus. 4.16.9).

²¹⁰ See also Whitaker's (2019, 64-124) examination of Graeco-Roman and Jewish (un)disguised/(un)recognised divine and hero visitor stories.

the *Odyssey*.²¹¹ Hospitality may be private or public with ξένοϛ being a stranger, friend, family or community member, or social-group member.²¹² Established expectations allowed guests to test hospitality.²¹³ A [virtual] theoxenic episode may be positive with hospitality rewarded or negative with retribution for inhospitality.²¹⁴ Incognito figures remain unrecognised, divulge their identities, or are recognised by characteristics, behaviours (e.g., deities' unusual departures), or other details.²¹⁵

Reece demonstrates that Homeric hospitality type-scenes include thirty-eight elements, such as arriving, receiving, seating, feasting, identification, bedding down, gifts, departing, and escorting.²¹⁶ These (sequential) elements underlie accounts, but every scene differs and none features every component.²¹⁷ Other episodes may lack common Homeric elements (e.g., entertainment, lodging, or food).²¹⁸ Denaux offers an ancient Mediterranean divine visitation pattern involving: arrival; disguise; appearance; reception/(in)hospitality; salvation or punishment; (super)natural disappearance/departure; and recognisability before or during departure.²¹⁹ Jipp reduces the scheme, but omits the common departure component: (in)hospitality towards the disguised/unrecognised guest; recognition; and rewards/retribution.²²⁰ I suggest five underlying elements: unrecognised visitor's arrival; (in)hospitality; rewards/retribution; pondering/enquiring of visitor's identity and/or recognition; and departure. This pattern emerges in Homer's *Odyssey*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, and elsewhere in Graeco-Roman literature.

²¹¹ Louden 2011, 30-57; cf. Fenik 1974, 5-61; Kearns 1982; Reece 1993, 181-87; Murnaghan 2011. Bierl (2004, 49-51) observes Odysseus' similarity to Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae*.

²¹² Denaux 1999, 256-67; Arterbury 2005, 15-28.

²¹³ See Gustav Stählin, "ξένοϛ, κτλ," *TDNT* 5:1-36; Pitt-Rivers 1968 (inhospitality); Bolchazy 1977 (early Roman period); Christianity: Riddle 1938; Rusche 1957; Koenig 1985.

²¹⁴ Louden 2011, 32; Newton 2015; Petridou 2016, 289-309; cf. Reece 1993, 29-30; Denaux 1999, 260 n. 21.

²¹⁵ Rose 1956; Graf 2004a; in Homer: Dietrich 1983, 65-67; Smith 1988, 163; Turkeltaub 2007; Chew 2011, 208-217.

²¹⁶ Reece 1993, 5-46; cf. Jones 2004, 9-10; de Jong 2004, 16-18, *passim*.

²¹⁷ Reece 1993, 7-8.

²¹⁸ Arterbury (2005, 136) includes Luke 1:39-56 despite no lodging or food. Accounts might imply food (Luke 9:4 [cf. 10:7-8]; Acts 16:14-15; 21:3-16; 28:1-14), except with inhospitality (e.g., Luke 9:51-56).

²¹⁹ Denaux 1999, 266 (relying on Landau 1901, 5; Flückiger-Guggenheim 1984, 11-17).

²²⁰ Jipp 2013, 24, 77, 257 (identifying elements is "an artificial abstraction"); cf. no significant departure in Acts 28:1-10, Jipp's focal passage.

i. Disguised or Divine Visitation and (In)hospitality in Homeric Epic

Deities reputedly visit incognito in the *Odyssey*'s storyworld. After Athene reveals herself, Odysseus confesses the difficulty for mortals 'to recognise' (γνῶναι) her, since she makes herself like (ἔϊσκαεῖς) anything (13.312-13).²²¹ Alcinous comments that disguised Odysseus could be an immortal from heaven, since gods visibly appear to participate in feasts or openly meet travellers (7.198-206). Telemachus and Penelope surmise that Odysseus could be a divine visitor (16.172-85; 23.58-68), as does a youth rebuking Antinous (17.483-87):

Antinous, it is indeed not good that you struck this unfortunate beggar, you accursed one, if perhaps he is some god from heaven. And the gods do take the likeness of strangers (ξείνοισιν ἑοικότες) in foreign lands, taking all kinds of shapes (παντοῖοι τελέθοντες), they visit (ἐπιστροφῶσι) cities, observing both the wanton violence and good order of people.

This gnomic statement elucidates the Homeric theoxenic script.

We may contrast significant positive and negative [virtual] theoxenic episodes.²²² Disguised or unrecognised visitors arriving are welcomed: Athene-Mentes at Ithaca (1.96-118); Telemachus and Athene-Mentor at Pylos (3.30-35); Telemachus and Peisistratus at Sparta (4.1-24); Odysseus at Scheria (6.127-7.151);²²³ and Odysseus (disguised as a beggar by Athene; 13.429-38) at Eumaeus' hut (14.1-28). In negative scenes unrecognised Odysseus arrives unwelcomed at Polyphemus' cave with comrades (9.181-223) and at Ithaca where herdsmen verbally and physically abuse him (17.204-253).

Hosts extend hospitality, providing meals, seats, beds, gifts, and/or entertainment: Telemachus to Athene-Mentes (1.119-43); Nestor to Telemachus and Athene-Mentor (3:35-51; cf. 3.345-55, 396-403); Menelaus to Telemachus and Peisistratus (4.25-67, 296-305; 15.133-42); the Phaeacians to Odysseus (6.186-7.134; 7.152-97, 317-28, 335-47; 8.423-520; 13.3-28); Eumaeus to Odysseus (14.29-59

²²¹ Cf. *H.H. Dem.* 111.

²²² Reece (1993) addresses the following scenes, four in the *Iliad*, and a couple from *Homeric Hymns* (*Demeter*; *Aphrodite*), excluding minor scenes (*Od.* 3.488-90; 15.186-88; *Il.* 6.171-77).

²²³ Cf. Dio Chrysostom's (*Or.* 7) reception of this and other hospitality accounts, telling of a shipwrecked stranger (see Jipp 2013, 127-30).

[noting hospitality; cf. 14.404], 72-82, 401-458, 518-33; 16.49-55); Telemachus then Penelope to Odysseus (16.78-89; 19.96-99, 317-60). In negative episodes visitors are treated inhospitably: Polyphemus fails to offer hospitality, verbally abuses Odysseus, and devours his comrades (9.224-29, 272-311); and Odysseus seats himself (17.254-61, 336-41 [in a doorway]) in his palace where suitors loathe, abuse, and slander him, withholding sustenance (17.360-480; 18.1-123 [except after fighting], 346-404; 19.65-59).

Divine visitors reward hosts: Athene ensures Odysseus' return and aids revenge (1.200-212, 252-305; cf. 15.1-42); Athene prays for Pylos (3.52-59) and grants Nestor's family κλέος (3.380-85). Mortal visitors tend not to reward hosts, such as the youths at Sparta or Odysseus at Scheria, but Odysseus spares Eumaeus' life and promises luxury (14.53-54; 21.205-216). In negative accounts visitors punish inhospitality: Odysseus blinds Polyphemus, escapes, and mocks him, attributing retribution to Zeus (9.360-479, 502-505; the god of ξένου/ξένιος: 9.270-71; 14.389); and Odysseus, aided by Athene and loyal compatriots, destroys disloyal Ithacans (22.1-479; cf. 23.55-57).

Hosts ponder or enquire of visitors' identities who are recognised or reveal themselves: Telemachus of Athene-Mentes (1.156-77; cf. 1.405-411); Nestor of Telemachus and Athene-Mentes, so Telemachus reveals himself (3.67-101); Menelaus of Telemachus and Peisistratus, but Peisistratus reveals their identities when Helen surmises Telemachus' identity (4.60-65, 100-119, 137-67); the Phaeacians of Odysseus (7.233-39; 8.533-34, 550-86), but Odysseus reveals himself when Alcinous becomes increasingly curious (9.16-28); Eumaeus of Odysseus (14.45-47, 185-90) who remains incognito, testing hospitality (15.301-339); and Telemachus then Penelope of Odysseus (16.56-59; 19.99-105), but Eurycleia recognises his scar (19.379-81, 465-79) and Odysseus privately reveals himself to loyal individuals (16.186-89; 19.479-98; 21.205-226; 23.164-240). In negative instances: Polyphemus demands to know Odysseus' identity (9.279-80) who withholds it (9.250-55, 263-71, 355, 366-67) until escaping (9.500-505); and Odysseus reveals his identity at Ithaca whilst enacting retribution (22.1-78).

Eventually, divine visitors depart, often miraculously, and mortal visitors depart, often with a farewell, escorted and/or with gifts: Athene-Mentes 'flying upward as a bird' (1.320) and Telemachus marvels (θαμβήσεν), deeming her a god

(1.322-24; cf. 1.420-21); Athene-Mentor ‘likening herself to a sea-eagle’ as spectators marvel (θάμβος; θαύμαζεν) and Nestor infers Telemachus’ divine favour and guidance (3.372-84) whereas Peisistratus escorts Telemachus (3.447-86); Telemachus and Peisistratus from Sparta (4.593-624; 15.52-185); Odysseus from Scheria (13.47-92); and Odysseus from Eumaeus’ hut (17.182-203). In negative scenes: Odysseus escapes Polyphemus whilst exchanging insults (9.315-566); and Odysseus does not depart Ithaca, reclaiming his household.

ii. Disguised Visit of Dionysus and Inhospitability in Euripides’ *Bacchae*

Euripides’ *Bacchae* features a mixed plot, including theoxeny with vengeful Dionysus anthropomorphically visiting Thebes for its ritual initiation, punishing the inhospitable ‘god-fighter’ (θεομάχος) king Pentheus for rejection.²²⁴ The audience recognises incognito Dionysus, but Thebans encounter a ξένοσ from Lydia (233-34; cf. 247, 353, 441, 453, 642, 800, 1047, 1059, 1063, 1068, 1077).²²⁵ Theomorphic Dionysus becomes anthropomorphic to defend his mother’s honour and to be acknowledged as a god (4, 42, 53-54; cf. 182). Dionysus’ divine presence is either beneficial or detrimental depending on responses. Oranje observes, “...Euripides weaves together the epiphanic motives in his plot into the principium actionis: the continuous oppressive or liberating presence of a god among mortals”.²²⁶ Dionysus, traversing territories, comes first to Thebes of the Greek cities to manifest his divinity among his people (including his aunts) who suppose that he is merely the son of a mortal father, not Zeus (13-29).

Despite Cadmus and Teiresias urging king Pentheus to welcome the bacchic cult (170-214, 266-327, 330-42), he is inhospitable. After incarcerating bacchantes, Pentheus captures, insults, interrogates, and threatens the stranger (343-460, 672-76), but the self-composed god responds cryptically and avoids questions whilst implicitly

²²⁴ Burnett 1970; Garvie 2016, 109-110; cf. Flückiger-Guggenheim 1984, 101-119; Weaver 2004, 32-58; Jipp 2013, 88-95.

²²⁵ Oranje 1984, 20, 131-34. He is a reputed γόης/‘wizard’ or ἐπωδός/‘enchanter’ (234). A γόης could shape-shift (Hdt. 4.105; Plato, *Resp.* 380d) (Seaford 1996, 172), but since the Thebans are unaware of his transformation, it refers to rhetorical trickery (cf. Eur., *Hipp.* 1038-40; Demosthenes, *Cor.* 276; Plato, *Symp.* 203d) (see Leinieks 1996, 232-33). Elsewhere, ἐπωδός connotes eloquent deception, including charming through song/chant (Eur., *Hipp.* 1038). Trickery and deceit demonstrate divine action and presence (cf. *Bacch.* 22, 860-861) (Oranje 1984, 32-33).

²²⁶ Oranje 1984, 131.

asserting his true identity (461-518). The god escapes, producing an earthquake (576-614) and controlling Pentheus' mind, even causing him to think his house is ablaze (615-41). As a retributive trick, Dionysus drives Pentheus insane and convinces him to commit espionage dressed as a bacchant (810-61, 912-76). He makes Agaue perceive Pentheus as a lion to dismember him (1024-1152, 1165-1329). Finally, the visitor disappears, alluding to his true identity (1077-1083).

iii. Other Graeco-Roman Disguised or Divine Visitation and (In)hospitality

Admetus extends hospitality to his veiled, post-mortem wife Alcestis accompanied by Heracles (Eur., *Alc.* 1007-1158). According to Pausanias (3.16.2-3), the Dioscuri returned as Cyrenian ξένοι to their Amyclaeon home. Phormion receives them, but declines their request for their former chamber which his daughter occupied. The next morning, Phormion discovers that they departed with his daughter. Pseudo-Plutarch (*Para.* 9) records that Icarius entertained Dionysus/Saturn who seduced his daughter Entoria. Visiting gods are typically undisguised or remain unrecognised in Apollonius Rhodius or are recognised by extraordinary departures in Roman epic.²²⁷ Falernus hosts incognito Bacchus who enters the cottage, lavishly dines, reveals himself, and rewards the vine-dresser, filling his vessels with wine and Mount Massicus with grapevines (Sil. It. 7.162-211). No explicit departure is recorded, but divine/bacchic sleep overtakes Falernus, then upon awaking the god is absent (7.199-205).

Ovid (*Metam.* 8.612-724) relates how incognito Jupiter/Jupiter and Mercury/Hermes visiting Phrygia experience inhospitality, except from Baucis and Philemon.²²⁸ The poor, elderly couple 'received' (*recepit*, 8.630) the strangers, extending lavish hospitality (8.640-81). The gods forbid the couple to sacrifice their only goose after noting their guests' divinity who miraculously replenished wine. (8.642-91). The visitors declare that they will punish the impious (*impia*, 8.693) vicinity, sparing only the couple who follow them to the mountain (8.691-97). The gods, proclaiming that Baucis is worthy of her 'just' (*iuste*, 8.707) husband, make the

²²⁷ Chew 2011, 213-14; cf. Rose 1956, 67-71.

²²⁸ See further: Malten 1939; 1940; Griffin 1991; cf. Flückiger-Guggenheim 1984, 50-56. This recalls Jupiter's visit to the wicked king Lycaon (1.163-252) and resembles the disguised visitation of Jupiter, Mercury, and Neptune to elderly Hyrieus (*Fasti* 5.439-544) (see Jipp 2013, 123-26; cf. Griffin 1991, 62).

couple's home a temple and grant them to tend it until dying old together (8.698-727). The gods depart the vicinity, though no concluding withdrawal is recorded.

Dio Chrysostom speaks of heroes or deities visiting their founded cities:

...founding heroes or gods often return to their cities, being invisible/unseen (ὄντας ἀφανεῖς) to others both at offerings and any public festivals—if your founder Heracles should come beside a funeral pyre... would he indeed be exceedingly delighted hearing such a sound? Would he not depart (ἀπελθεῖν) to Thrace instead, or Libya, and be present (παρεῖναι)... as they sacrifice?... Would not Perseus certainly think to skip over (ὑπερπηῆναι) the city? (*Or.* 33.47).

Such invisible or unrecognised visitors depart if displeased and proceed elsewhere, favouring others with their presence.

2.1.2. Luminous Epiphanies

Gods appear discretely or candidly.²²⁹ Luminosity characterises divine epiphanies,²³⁰ a trait of the heavenly abode (Olympus), represented by white or gold garments, skin complexion, ornaments, and materially by chryselephantine statues (ca. fifth century BCE).²³¹ Even an apparition of a post-mortem girl wearing a glittering golden robe causes Egyptian brigands to suppose she is Artemis, Isis, or an inspired priestess (Heliodorus, *Aeth.* 1-3). Gods manifest as light-forms (fiery torches or columns), manipulate cosmic luminous bodies (the sun or moon), and create luminous phenomena (fiery clouds) to aid mortals, gaining some deities the cult title 'Phosphoros'.²³² For example, Artemis Phosphoros manifests as a fiery pillar to aid Thrasybulus' escape by illuminating his path, an account Clement (*Strom.* 1.24) parallels with Yahweh's fiery column epiphany during the exodus.²³³ Lightning epiphanies serve as interventions against malefactors resistant to cultic foundation or

²²⁹ On epiphanies see Pfister 1924; Pax 1955; Graf 2004a; 2004b (staged, mistaken, and reported); Petridou 2015; Platt 2015.

²³⁰ McCartney 1941; Versnel 1987, 51; Parisinou 2000; Burkert 2004, 10-11 (associations with fire and lightning); cf. Plutarch, *Per.* 39.3.

²³¹ Constantinidou 2010, 91-92.

²³² Petridou 2015, 135-38, cf. 104; possibly from 'torch-bearing' deities (Parisinou 2000, 81-93).

²³³ Petridou 2015, 136.

expansion.²³⁴ Mystic epiphanies may be luminous, such as a ‘beautiful light’ (φῶς κάλλιστον) during a ritual (Aristophanes, *Ran.* 154-57).²³⁵ Heroes also radiate light during their *aristeia*.²³⁶ Radiance is expressed by white attire or horses (e.g., the Dioscuri: Justin 20.2-3; Paus. 4.27.1-3 [feigned epiphany]; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 2.31.4).²³⁷ This is either absent in votive iconography or represented by non-extant paint, evidenced in Aeneas Tacticus’ (31.15) description of a ‘light-bearing’ (φωσφόρον) horseman having white garments and a white horse to be drawn over a secret message.²³⁸

Light indicates divine presence already in Homeric times. Athene’s presence is ascertained by her lamp/torch (Hom., *Od.* 19.33-43), emanating neither from her²³⁹ nor Odysseus.²⁴⁰ Still, incognito gods’ radiant eyes might reveal their identities (*Il.* 1.199-200; 3.396-98), a feature applied to others: Dionysus (Aristophanes, *Lys.* 1284-85),²⁴¹ Heracles (Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 2.4.9), Venus (Verg., *Aen.* 5.647-48), and possibly Apollo (Apoll. Rhod. 2.681-84). In a theoxenic episode, Demeter enters Celeus’ house, her head reaches the roof, and ‘divine brightness’ (σέλαος θείοιο) fills the entrance (*H.H. Dem.* 188-90; cf. 90-281). She remains disguised as an elderly woman, but when she reveals herself to Metaneira her appearance changes, including a ‘lustre’ (φέγγος) that ‘shone’ (λάμπει) from her skin with her ‘gleam’ (αὐγῆς) filling the house ‘like lightning’ (ἀστεροπῆς ὥς, 275-81).²⁴² Metaneira is overcome with reverential fear (190, 282-93). Apollo darts from a ship in midday appearing like a ‘star’ (ἀστέρι) with flying ‘sparks’ (σπινθαρίς) causing ‘brightness’ (σέλας) in heaven (*H.H. Ap.* 440-48). Difficulty looking at gods (cf. Hom, *Il.* 20.131) may be due to daunting sizes or features,²⁴³ rather than luminosity.

²³⁴ Brenk 1994, 416-17.

²³⁵ Petridou 2015, 253.

²³⁶ Turkeltaub 2003, 222 n. 477.

²³⁷ Bravo 2004, 67. Pleasure and Virtue have radiant garments (*Sil. It.* 15.24, 31).

²³⁸ Bravo 2004, 73.

²³⁹ Contra Russo in Russo et al 1992, 76.

²⁴⁰ Contra Bierl 2004, 54-56.

²⁴¹ Also, lightning accompanies Zeus here (cf. Diod. Sic. 3.64.4).

²⁴² Petridou 2015, 268.

²⁴³ See Dietrich 1983, 68-69; Smith 1988.

Incognito Dionysus' disappearance accompanies his epiphanic voice and 'a light of solemn fire' (φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός) between heaven and earth (Eur., *Bacch.* 1082-83).²⁴⁴ Xenophon says, 'a light (φῶς) from heaven appeared shining forth (προφανὲς γενέσθαι) upon Cyrus and his army', guiding them during night (*Cyr.* 4.2.15; probably Zeus [cf. 4.3.6]). Aresthanas sees lightning flash from baby Asclepius and turns away, not due to luminosity, 'but thinking it was something divine' (νομίσαντα δὲ εἶναι θεῖόν τι, Paus. 2.26.5). Demeter and Persephone support Timoleon's naval voyage with a blazing torch in the sky (Diod. Sic. 16.66.3-5; Plutarch, *Tim.* 8), implying the goddesses' "corporeal presence".²⁴⁵ Lucan (2.79) records how an executioner sees a divine light before a voice commands him not to kill Marius. Maximus of Tyre (*Or.* 9.7), additional to witnessing epiphanies of Asclepius and Heracles, claims to have seen the astromorphic Dioscuri and says that others have seen Hector flashing light. Light also characterises erotic epiphanies. Notably, Anchises looks away from Aphrodite appearing in garments 'radiant with a gleam of fire' (φαεινότερον πυρὸς ἀγῆς) that are 'shining' (ἐλάμπετο) like the moon (*H.H. Aph.* 81-90, 173-75, 181-90), and Scipio's mother sees serpent-form Jupiter's *lumina* (Sil. It. 13.637-44).²⁴⁶

Luminous epiphanies occur in Vergil's *Aeneid*. Disguised Venus reveals herself to Aeneas as her rosy neck glistens (*rosea cervice refulsit*, 1.402), then appears again and 'was refulgent through the night in pure light' (*pura per noctem in luce refulsit*, 2.588-93 [590]). Ovid includes several accounts. Phaethon is unable to approach enthroned Phoebus' radiance (*Metam.* 2.21-24). Telethusa prays to Isis whose altar moves, temple doors shake, image flashes light, and *sistrum* rattles (9.781-84). Similarly, Phoebus appears in his temple, glittering with sparkling eyes (15.665-79). A room becomes brighter with Janus' epiphany (*Fasti* 1.89-98) and light accompanies Vesta's epiphany (6.249-56).

Blinding by epiphanic luminosity is uncommon. According to *Vita Romana* 5, the epiphanic brightness (τῆς ἀγῆς) of Achilles' armour blinds Homer (τυφλωθῆναι)

²⁴⁴ Cf. Nonnus (ca. fifth century CE) describes incarceration deliverances with a god-sent radiance (θεόσσωτος... ἀγλή) filling a cell, self-opening doors, and loosening restraints as bacchant dance (*Dion.* 45.273-84).

²⁴⁵ Pritchett 1979, 17.

²⁴⁶ Petridou 2015, 231.

or he was punitively blinded by Helen.²⁴⁷ Herodotus (6.117.1-3) relates how Epizelus was ‘deprived of his eyes’ (τῶν ὀμμάτων στερηθῆναι), living ‘blind’ (τυφλόν) after seeing an epiphanic hoplite φάσμα at Marathon, but light is not mentioned. Spectators may initially divert attention due to daunting theomorphic features or fear, though most accounts are unspecific. Blindness in Graeco-Roman mythology is usually punitive or implies a compensated gift,²⁴⁸ not a consequence of uncontrolled epiphanic luminosity. Inferably, luminosity and its effects occur by divine discretion, so any resultant perceptual impairment is intentional.

2.1.3. Reflexive Disappearances

Whereas a divine *epiphaneia* normally concludes with an explicit or implicit reflexive *aphaneia*, mortals passively disappear (pre- or post-mortem, with or without translation), despite identical ancient terminology for these phenomena.²⁴⁹ I provide reflexive disappearances of both pre-mortem or immortal figures and immortalised figures concluding post-translation appearances.²⁵⁰ I also give examples of disappearing phantoms, apparitions, ghosts, or other figures, sometimes part of dreams or visions.²⁵¹

i. Reflexive Pre-Mortem or Immortal Disappearance

Homeric gods do not disappear per se, but depart with flying manoeuvres (similes or metamorphosis), such as ornithoid withdrawals, often resulting in marvelling (e.g., *Od.* 1.319-24, 410-11; 3.371-74; 6.41-51; 10.307-309; 22.239-40).²⁵² A disappearance concludes Dionysus’ theoxeny in the *Bacchae*: ‘and whilst the stranger was no longer present to be seen (τὸν ξένον μὲν οὐκέτ’ εἰσορᾶν παρῆν), yet from the ether some voice—inferred to be Dionysus—shouted aloud’ (1077-

²⁴⁷ On Homer’s blindness in ancient biography see Beecroft 2011.

²⁴⁸ Tatti-Gartziou 2010.

²⁴⁹ I employ ‘*aphaneia*’ (ἀφάνεια) to denote disappearance as a counterpart to ‘*epiphaneia*’ (ἐπιφάνεια), though other ancient terminology describes these (following Petridou 2015, 4). Although Petridou (2015, 4, 267) includes Hades abducting Kore as an *aphaneia* (ἠφανισμένης, Diod. Sic. 5.5.1), I differentiate this as a passive disappearance (‘assumption’/‘seizure’/‘rapture’).

²⁵⁰ On translation or ascent traditions and Jesus’ resurrection or ascension see §§6.1.2, 6.2.3.

²⁵¹ I exclude inanimate objects (e.g., Diod. Sic. 15.53.4; Xenophon, *Hell.* 6.4.7; Apoll. Paradox., *Hist. mir.* 5).

²⁵² Scholars impose disappearance readings (Buxton 2009, 32-37).

79).²⁵³ The stranger's *aphaneia* joining Dionysus' epiphanic voice and a supernatural light (1082-83) imply his identity. Similarly, Diodorus Siculus (5.51.4) records that Dionysus 'disappeared' (ἠφανίσθη) then Ariadne later 'became vanished' (ἄφαντος ἐγενήθη), probably raptured by him.²⁵⁴

In Apollonius Rhodius, nymphs spoke to Jason 'and vanished where they stood' (καὶ ἄφαντοι ἴν' ἔσταθεν, 4.1330).²⁵⁵ Jason attributes this to a 'mist' (ἀχλύς) or 'cloud' (νέφος) hiding them (4.1361-62), and his companions 'marvelled' (ἐθάμβεον, 4.1363). Pseudo-Plutarch (*De fluviis* 4.3) relates how the nymph Anaxibia fled the Sun, entered the temple of Artemis Orthia, 'and became vanished' (καὶ ἀφανῆς ἐγένετο). Her disappearance is literal, figurative for moving out of sight, or both. Plutarch (*Them.* 10.1-3) speaks of a serpent representing Athene becoming vanished (ἀφανῆς... γενέσθαι) from its sacred enclosure on the Acropolis of Athens.²⁵⁶

In Vergil's *Aeneid*, Venus appears disguised to Aeneas, reveals herself, then flees (*fugientem*, 1.406), so he is unable to embrace her (*falsis ludis imaginibus*, 1.408), and envelops him in a cloud before departing upward (*sublimis abit*, 1.415). Mercury appears to Aeneas and 'left mortal sight in the middle of his speech and vanished away into thin air from his eyes' (*mortalis visus medio sermone reliquit, et procul in tenuem ex oculis evanuit auram*, 4.277-78). The near exact phrase describes disguised Apollo vanishing (9.657-58, with *mortalis medio aspectus*). The Dardans hear Apollo's quiver rattling in 'flight' (*fuga*, 9.660), implying a vanishing-ascension, and 'knew' (*agnovere*, 9.659) it was him by this departure.

Reflexive disappearances of mortals are uncommon. During his trial before Domitian, Apollonius claims to be immortal, then 'he was vanished (ἠφανίσθη) from the court' (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5; cf. ἀπελθεῖν, 8.12). He teleports since 'he appeared' (ἐφάνη) elsewhere (8.10-12 [10]; cf. 7.41). He refutes the accusation that he is a γόης, arguing that he would not have been brought to court (7.17).²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Stageability conditioned tragic performances of (dis)appearances or other preternatural phenomena.

²⁵⁴ Cf. Nonnus (*Dion.* 45.236-39) relates how Dionysus suddenly 'was vanished' (ἦεν ἄφαντος), escaping capture.

²⁵⁵ Sea deities vanish into water, e.g., Thetis (αἰδηλος, 4.865) and Triton (ἄφαντος... ἐπλετο: 4.1590-91; cf. ἄφαντος/'unseen': 4.536); see Pease's (1942, 10 n. 78) examples.

²⁵⁶ See Petridou 2015, 4, 146-47.

²⁵⁷ See Dickie 2001, 73; Reimer 2003, 130.

Apollonius is ‘impossible to catch’ (κρείττων τοῦ ἀλῶναι, 1.4), but unlike Proteus, because his immortal soul is released from bodily imprisonment.²⁵⁸ Proteus allusions contribute to Apollonius’ ambiguous divine-human character (cf. 1.4-6; 2.2; 7.38; 8.13).²⁵⁹ Philostratus is careful to source Apollonius’ deeds in divine cosmic power, not μάγῳ τέχνη/μαγεύειν despite associating with μάγοι (1.2; cf. 8.7), who prognosticates by divine manifestation (οἱ θεοὶ ἔφαινον), not beguiling (οὐ γοητεύων) (5.12; cf. 7.39).²⁶⁰ In Lucian’s *Philopseudes* 33-36 philosophers testify to persuade Tychiades that magic is efficacious.²⁶¹ Eucrates (‘Well-powerful’) attests to the wonder-working Pancrates (‘All-powerful’) who performs miracles using spells.²⁶² Eucrates relates how he could not stop an animated pestle, so Pancrates ‘stood by’ (ἐφίσταται), made it inanimate, and vanished to an unknown location (αὐτὸς δὲ ἀπολιπὼν με λαθὼν οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅποι ἀφανῆς ὄχετο ἀπιῶν, 36).

ii. Reflexive Disappearances Concluding Post-Transformation Appearances

Scholars gloss disappearances concluding post-translation epiphanies, a phenomenon infrequently depicted in antiquity.²⁶³ Disappearances concluding some post-translation epiphanies are inferable (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.30-31; Isocrates, [*Hel. enc.*] 10.65; Paus. 4.16.9; Lucian, *Peregr.* 40). No disappearance concludes Zalmoxis’ ‘epiphany’ who reportedly feigns post-mortem translation (Hdt. 9.94-95). Some prominent traditions do not include post-translation epiphany (e.g., Cleomedes of Astypalaea: Paus. 6.9.6-8; Plutarch, *Rom.* 28.4-5; Origen, *Cels.* 3.3, 25, 33; Alcmena: Plutarch, *Rom.* 28.6). Other cases are clearer.

The poet Aristeas of Proconnesus died in a shop, but his relatives did not find him dead or alive, and a traveller allegedly met and spoke with him (Hdt. 4.14.1-3). He ‘appeared’ (φάνεντα) seven years later in Proconnesus, ‘but he disappeared a second time’ (δὲ ἀφανισθῆναι τὸ δεύτερον, 4.14.3). Two-hundred-and-forty years after ‘the second disappearance’ (τὴν ἀφάνισιν τὴν δευτέραν, 4.15.1), he ‘appeared’

²⁵⁸ Paschalis 2015. On Apollonius vanishing from earthly life (8.28-31) see Flinterman 2009.

²⁵⁹ Miles 2016.

²⁶⁰ Cf. 2 Tim 3:13 (resisting γόητες).

²⁶¹ Satire bears little on its extratextual contribution for my purposes, especially with its derisions of existing matters.

²⁶² See Ogden (2004; 2007), including for historical and literary contexts.

²⁶³ E.g., Alsup 1975, 214-39; Cook 2018, 608; see Chapter 6.

(φανέντα) to the Metapontines commanding them to erect an altar to Apollo and a statue naming himself who ornithomorphically accompanied Apollo (4.15.2). Afterwards, ‘he was vanished’ (ἀφανισθῆναι, 4.15.3). The Metapontines sent messengers to Delphi and the Pythia at Delphi advised the Metapontines to obey the ‘appearance’ (φάσματι, 4.15.3). Whilst other accounts mention Aristeas’ missing body or subsequent appearance (Pindar, *fr.* 284; Apoll. Paradox., *Hist. mir.* 2.1-2; Plutarch, *Rom.* 28.4; Pliny, *Nat.* 7.174; Origen, *Cels.* 3.26-28), only Herodotus records post-translation disappearances (ἀφανίζω: 4.14.3; 4.15.3; ἀφάνισις: 4.15.1). Herodotus’ use of ἀφανίζω for both the body’s initial disappearance and post-translation disappearance presents a risk of relying on terminology for distinguishing phenomena.

The legend of Romulus’ pre-mortem disappearance and apparent apotheosis is well attested (Cicero, *Rep.* 2.17; Horace, *Carm.* 3.3; Dion. Hal., *Ant. rom.* 2.56.1-7; Ovid, *Metam.* 14.805-828; Plutarch, *Rom.* 27.1-8; 29.2; *Cam.* 32.5; Pseudo-Plutarch, *Para.* 32). Some descriptions include his post-transformation appearance (Dion. Hal., *Ant. rom.* 2.63.1-4; Florus, *Epit.* 1.1; cf. Augustine, *Civ.* 3.15). Fewer record post-translation departures. According to Livy, Julius Proculus claimed that Romulus descended, appeared to him, delivered a message (1.16.1-7), then, ‘having spoken, he departed on high’ (*locutus sublimis abiit*, 1.16.8).²⁶⁴ Plutarch describes Romulus’ post-translation departure as a gradual ascension (probably passive), stating that Proculus saw Romulus ‘being carried up (ἀναφερόμενον) into heaven with armour’ (*Num.* 2.3; cf. *Rom.* 27.1-28.3). Ovid says that Julius Proculus was travelling,

when suddenly the hedges on his left moved and trembled, he drew back a step, his hair having bristled up, Romulus was seen present in the middle of the road, beautiful and more than human (*pulcher et humano maior*), wearing a decorous white robe (*Fasti* 2.501-504; cf. 2.75-511).

Romulus ordered him to forbid mourning and to worship him as divine Quirinus (2.505-508), ‘and he vanished into thin air before his eyes’ (*et in tenues oculis evanuit auras*, 2.509), so people built temples and worshipped him as a god (2.510-512).

Pseudo-Plutarch (*Para.* 32) parallels the Romulus-legend with Peisistratus of Orchomenus. Aristocrats dismembering Peisistratus hide his parts in their garments,

²⁶⁴ Cf. a celestial eagle *sublimis abiit* (Livy 1.34.8).

leading Tlesimachus to placate an incensed crowd by claiming to have seen his father in superhuman form (μείζονα μορφήν ἀνθρώπου κεκτημένον) ‘being borne’ (φέρεσθαι) to a mountain. Whether Peisistratus reflexively ascends or an unexpressed agent assumes him is uncertain.

Asclepius was immortalised (Lucian, *Dial. d.* 15/13.236; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 23.7; Hyginus, *Fab.* 224.5; 251.2) after Zeus’ thunderbolt struck him (Eur., *Alc.* 3-4), but he reportedly appears with or as serpents (Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.14; Origen, *Cels.* 3.24). Asclepius licked Plutus’ eyelids, ‘But the god immediately vanished (ἠφάνισεν), he and the serpents, into the temple’ (Aristophanes, *Plut.* 740-41). His vanishing is literal, figurative for entering the temple, or both. Two superhuman men (probably the Dioscuri) appeared at the battle of the Sagra and afterwards were no longer visible (*nec ultra apparuerunt, quam pugnatum est*, Justin 20.3). In Pausanias’ account of the Dioscuri’s theoxeny to Amyclae, Phormion discovers their images and *silphium* where his daughter with her apparel ‘disappeared’ (ἠφάνιστο, 3.16.3). Finally, Lucian tells how the translated philosopher Empedocles appears to Menippus in Hades, then gradually recedes and dissolves into smoke (ὁ δὲ κατ’ ὀλίγον ὑπαπιῶν ἐς καπνὸν ἠρέμα διελύετο, *Icar.* 15), but Empedocles denies being a god and discourages likening him to one (13).

iii. Disappearances of Phantoms, Apparitions, and Ghosts

Graeco-Roman literature features disappearing phantoms, apparitions, or ghosts, including in dreams or visions.²⁶⁵ Ancients, often understanding dreams, visions, and epiphanies as related or indistinguishable, pondered the reality of their contents.²⁶⁶ In Homer, a post-mortem ghost/life (ψυχή) departs (ᾤχετο, *Il.* 23.100-101) or flutters (ἔπτατο, *Od.* 11.204-210) when nearly embraced (cf. *Il.* 16.855-56, 22.361-62; *Od.* 11.218-22, 605).²⁶⁷ An image (εἶδωλον) made by Athene (*Od.* 4.796) passes through Penelope’s closed bedroom doors ‘by the thong of the bolt’ (4.802) and later ‘drew back’ or ‘disappeared’ (λιάσθη, 4.838) into the winds the same

²⁶⁵ See Pease 1942, 6-8; Hanson 1980, 1411 (dream figures); cf. more generally: Johnston 1999; Heath 2005; Dufallo 2007; Harrison 2013.

²⁶⁶ Harris 2009, 23-76.

²⁶⁷ On Greek afterlife notions see Bremmer 1983; 2002; Richardson 1985.

way.²⁶⁸ Athene appears as Dymas' daughter to Nausicaa whilst she sleeps, then 'departed' (ἀπέβη) to Olympus (6.13-49 [41, 47]). Herodotus recounts how a divine φάσμα resembling Ariston lay with Demaratus' mother, then 'was gone' (οιχώκεε, 6.69.2; cf. 6.67-69). Herodotus also relays how a divine 'apparition/vision' (ὄψιν) or 'dream' (ὄνειρον) came to Xerxes and Artabanus (7.12-18), in which a man speaks then seems 'to fly away' (ἀποπτύσθαι, 7.13.1).

In Euripides' *Helen*, a messenger unknowingly guarding a phantom tells Menelaus, 'Your wife has departed (βέβηκεν) to the layers of ether, taken up unseen (ἀρθεῖσ' ἄφαντος), and is hidden (κρύπτεται) in heaven, leaving the holy cave where we ourselves were keeping her' (605-607).²⁶⁹ The messenger quotes her saying, 'I am departing (ἄπειμι) into heaven' (613-14). When the real Helen arrives he exclaims that he was just announcing her 'departure (βεβηκυῖαν) to the recesses of the stars' (617) and that he did not know she 'possessed a winged body' (ὑπόπτερον δέμας φοροίης, 618-19).

In Vergil's *Aeneid*, Creusa's 'ghost' (*umbra*, 2.772) speaks then 'deserted, and withdrew into thin air' (*deseruit, tenuisque recessit in auras*, 2.791).²⁷⁰ Similarly, Jupiter sends Anchises or his ghost from heaven who speaks to Aeneas, and afterwards 'flew off, like smoke, in thin air' (*tenuis fugit, ceu fumus, in auras*, 5.740). Aeneas later visits Anchises in the underworld (6.679-702), suggesting this was his *imago* (6.695).²⁷¹ Pausanias (1.32.5) says that a man of rustic appearance and apparel 'was vanished' (ἦν ἀφανής) after fighting at Marathon and a god orders enquiring Athenians to honour Echelaeus as a 'hero' (cf. 1.15.3; Plutarch, *Thes.* 35.5). His appearance, weapon (a plough), and *aphaneia* suggest an otherworldly figure.²⁷²

According to P.Oxy. 1381 (ca. second century CE) a dreamer sees a tall figure in radiant clothing (possibly Imouthes-Asclepius) that 'became vanished' (ἀφανής ἐγ[έ]νετο, lines 124-25). Plutarch records that in Darius' dream 'from a god' (*Alex.* 18.5), Alexander enters Belus' temple and 'became vanished' (ἀφανῆ γενέσθαι,

²⁶⁸ *LSJ*, s.v. "λάζομαι".

²⁶⁹ The phantom was made of clouds according to Ps.-Apollod., *Epit.* 3.1-6.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Tlepolemus' *umbra* in his wife's night-vision (Apuleius, *Metam.* 8.8-9).

²⁷¹ Cf. Sychaeus' *imago* in Dido's dream (1.353). On Creusa and Anchises, among others, eluding Aeneas' embraces (2.791-94; 5.740-42; 6.700-702) see Moskalew 1982, 150-52; Belfiore 1984.

²⁷² Petridou 2015, 24, 114.

18.4). Alexander literally disappears, moves out of sight, or both. Plutarch also relates a dream in which a messenger ‘immediately goes away’ (εὐθὺς οἴχεσθαι, *Def. orac.* 45 [434e]), but οἴχομαι proximal to εὐθὺς often connotes immediate natural departure (e.g., Plutarch, *Cat. Min.* 42.4; *Dem.* 24.2; *Garr.* 11 [508b]; *Luc.* 25.1; *Mar.* 5.3; *Sert.* 27.1; Demosthenes, *Pant.* 6; Dion. Hal., *Ant. rom.* 8.37.2). Galatea is present (in a dream) when Polyphemus sleeps, ‘but gone immediately’ (οἴχη δ’ εὐθὺς) when he awakes (Theocritus, *Id.* 11.21-23).

In a third-century CE romance fragment (P.Oxy. 1368), Glaucetes witnesses a post-mortem youth speaking to him, but after turning away then looking back the youth ‘was vanished’ (ἠφανίσθη, line 37), no longer seen (line 42). Whilst Eucrates grieved and read Plato’s *Phaedo* (on body-soul dichotomy) after his wife Demainete’s death, she ‘came beside’ (ἐπεισέρχεται) him and sat to converse, but when a dog barked ‘she was vanished’ (ἠφανίσθη) (Lucian, *Philops.* 27). Unlike other post-mortem apparitions, Demainete exhibits materiality since Eucrates embraces her.²⁷³ Felton identifies her as an “embodied ghost, though not a true revenant... referred to only by name and by pronouns... never by any of the words for ‘ghost.’”²⁷⁴ Similarly, Achilles reveals his ‘appearance’ (εἶδος, Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 4.16.1) and converses with Apollonius, then ‘departed in a moderate flash’ (ἀπῆλθε ξὺν ἀστραπῇ μετρίᾳ) as cocks crow (4.16.6). Elsewhere, a disguised δαίμων is stoned, but when the stones are removed only a hound is there, so someone comments that a φάσμα was slain (4.10). On another occasion, Apollonius insults a shape-shifting empousa’s φάσμα oscillating in and out of existence (2.4).

2.1.4. Invisibility

i. Invisibility in Homeric Epic

Figures may become undetectable by invisibility. In Homer’s *Iliad* Athene is invisible to the Greeks, except to Achilles (1.197-200). In the *Odyssey* she appears/stands (στῆ) anthropomorphically, ‘being manifest (φανεῖσα) to Odysseus, but Telemachus did not see (οὐδέ... ἴδεν) her before him, nor did he perceive anything (οὐδ’ ἐνόησεν)’ (16.159-60). The added gnomic utterance, ‘for gods do not by any means appear visible to all’ (οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς,

²⁷³ Cf. rocks passing through Polykritos’ ghost (Phlegon, *Mar.* 2).

²⁷⁴ Felton 1999, 79.

16.161), expresses divine selective invisibility. Later, Odysseus remarks that invisibility is the manner of the gods when Athene proceeds unseen before them bearing a glowing lamp (19.33-43).²⁷⁵

Circe also manoeuvres unseen, as Odysseus reports (10.571-74):

...Circe had gone up (οἰχομένη) and bound on a ram and a black female ewe beside the dark ship, easily passing by (ῥεῖα παρεξελθοῦσα). Who could see with one's own eyes a god not willing it, going either here or there? (τίς ἄν θεὸν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἴδοιτ' ἢ ἔνθ' ἢ ἔνθα κίοντα;).²⁷⁶

Unlike mortals, gods are reputedly capable of invisibility (cf. *Il.* 10.279-80; Eur., *Ion* 1550-51). Actional 'ease', a typical divine qualification, underscores Circe's divinity contrastive to mortals.²⁷⁷

Gods also conceal or inhibit movement using mists, including nebular vehicles.²⁷⁸ However, concealment with visible substances (e.g., Hom., *Il.* 5.776; 8.50) differs from invisibility with undetectable substances. Iliadic gods 'snatch away' (ἐξαπαράζω) favoured mortals, 'concealing' (καλύπτω) them 'in a thick mist' (ἠέρι πολλῇ) and relocating them, such as Aphrodite with Alexander (3.380-82) or Apollo with Hector (20.443-44) and Agenor (21.597-98). This is performed 'very easily as a god can' (ῥεῖα μάλ' ὥς τε θεός, 3.381; 20.444). Ambiguous instances may imply invisibility. Athene makes Diomedes' limbs light and comes beside him, implying invisibility, then lifts a mist from his eyes to see gods (5.121-32).²⁷⁹ Patroclus 'did not observe' (οὐκ ἐνόησεν, 16.789) Apollo passing through turmoil 'concealed in a thick mist' (ἠέρι... πολλῇ κεκαλυμμένος, 16.790) smiting him. Later, Athene 'clothing herself in a lurid cloud (πορφυρέη νεφέλη), made her way into the Achaean host, and roused (ἔγειρε) each man' (17.551-52). Whether she is invisible is unclear, but she likens herself to Phoenix to urge on Menelaus (17.553-55). Hermes makes Priam invisible and unrecognisable to the Danaans, possibly implying a mist

²⁷⁵ Perhaps a partial epiphany (Bierl 2004, 54).

²⁷⁶ Circe and Calypso are nymph goddesses subordinate to Olympian gods (1.14; 5.167-170, 209; 9.29-33, 154; 10.135-39).

²⁷⁷ De Jong 2004, 270, cf. 81. On divine ease see Nilsson 1980, 157; Burkert 1985, 122; Versnel 2011, 422-26.

²⁷⁸ Kakridis 1971 (*Iliad*); Erbse 1986, 117-118, 202.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Paus. 2.24.2; Aristophanes, *Eq.* 800-804.

(24.334-98). In the *Odyssey*, Athene conceals Odysseus and his companions in darkness (νυκτὶ κατακρύψασα) to leave the city during daytime (23.371-72; cf. 20.351; *Il.* 5.22-24, 506-508; 16.567-68).

ii. Other Graeco-Roman Invisibility

Already in Hesiod mists conceal the Muses (*Theog.* 9-10), δαίμονες of a post-mortem golden race (*Op.* 124-25; cf. 252-55), and Justice (220-24). Apollonius Rhodius adopts the mist motif. Most instances involve visible mists/clouds for concealment or undetected hostility evasion (e.g., 1.218; 3.210-14) rather than invisibility per se. Some cases are ambiguous. Hera pours mists around the Argonauts to pass by Celts and Ligyans unassailed (4.645-48). Eros comes to Aeëtes' palace 'unseen' (ἄφαντος, 3.275), causing confusion among people through a visible fog created by Hera (3.275-98; cf. 3.210-14). Still, he passes the threshold 'escaping notice' (λαθών, 3.280), crouches by Jason, shoots an arrow at Medea, and darts away rejoicing, all undetected without any apparent mist. Hera also demonstrates imperceptible or invisible manoeuvring (4.48-49): 'nor did any of the guards perceive it (ἔγνω), but she escaped notice rushing by them (λάθε δέ σφραζ ὀρηθεῖσα)'. Finally, Thetis is selectively visible to Peleus, but not to his companions (4.854).

Odysseus hears Athene's 'intelligible' (εὐμαθής) 'voice' (φθέγμα), but she remains 'unseen' (ἄποπτος) (Sophocles, *Aj.* 14-17).²⁸⁰ Similarly, Hippolytus hears Artemis' speech, but does not see her (κλύων μὲν αὐδῆς, ὄμμα δ' οὐχ ὀρών τὸ σόν, Eur., *Hipp.* 86). Triton says that Perseus was able to detect invisible Medusa due to Athene's shield functioning like a mirror (Lucian, *Dial. Mar.* 323). Dionysus and Heracles urge the Pans to attack a hill who see a cloud surrounding with inhabitants dwelling 'seen (φανερύς) and unseen (ἀφανεῖς)' as they will (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 3.13), but the visible cloud probably obscures them from sight. A partial (auditory) epiphany occurs when Pan 'encountered'/'encircled' (περιπίπτει) Pheidippides, 'calling' (βόσαντα) his name and speaking to him (Hdt. 6.105.1-2), though the runner says that the god 'appeared' (φανῆναι, 6.106.1) to him and other accounts indicate that Pan 'met' (ἐντυχόντα, Paus. 1.28.4) him or 'appeared' (φανῆναι) and 'spoke'

²⁸⁰ Pucci (1994, 19-31) interprets invisibility modelled after Homer.

(εἰπεῖν) with him (Paus. 8.54.6).²⁸¹ Pan's 'appearance' probably refers to his presence and the encounter, significant for the aetiological tradition of his Athenian cult, not necessarily his visibility.

In Vergil's *Aeneid*, Venus renders Aeneas invisible in an undetectable mist (1.410-17, 438-40; cf. 12.416-17). In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* divine mists often distort perception or conceal figures, including with metamorphosis (e.g., 1.601-606; 5.621-24; 8.851-54; 12.32-34; 15.538-39, 803-807). Apollo is veiled in a cloud at Troy and reveals his identity (12.597-601). Venus seats herself 'seen by none' (*nulli cernenda*) in the senate to capture Caesar's life before it ascends and vanishes (15.843-848). Elsewhere, Ovid relates that he hears rustling wings and turns back to look, 'but there was no body' (*nec erat corpus*), then he hears *Fama* ensuring him a good year (*Pont.* 4.4.11-20). In Silius Italicus' *Punica* the mist motif is mostly employed for divine self-concealment rather than concealing mortals (9.484-90) or transportation (1.548-52; 9.438-41). Juno dissolves a mist and appears gleaming of gold, telling Hannibal that with the cloud removed from his eyes she will grant full perception (1.704-708). An Erinys attends meetings and meals 'hidden in a cloud' (*abdita nube*) (13.291-93). No mist is implied when Juno sends Anna (or her spirit) to Libya's leader to stir up turmoil without being observed (*nulli conspecta*) (8.202-206; cf. 13.319-22).

iii. Invisibility Utilising Imbued Props, Recipes, and Spells

Imbued props grant invisibility, such as the 'cap/helmet of Hades' (Ἄϊδος κυνέην). Athene dons it to aid Diomedes, invisible to Ares (Hom., *Il.* 5.844-45). Hermes wears it to kill Hippolytus invisibly (Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 1.6.2), as does Perseus to behead Medusa (2.4.2-3; cf. Hesiod, *Scut.* 227).²⁸² Plato records how Gyges the Lydian discovers a gold ring allowing him to become invisible (ἀφανῆ αὐτὸν γενέσθαι, *Resp.* 359d; ἀδήλω γίγνεσθαι, 360a) or visible (φανερὸν γενέσθαι; δήλω, 360a) by turning a setting (359d-360b; cf. 612b; Hdt. 1.8-13; Cicero, *Off.* 3.38; Lucian, *Bis acc.* 21; *Nav.* 42).

²⁸¹ Petridou 2015, 13-14, 319-20 (citing Garland [1992, 51-54] and Borgeaud [1988, 88-129] who suggest mirroring Pan's amorphous manifestation as inflicted φόβος on the Persians [Hdt. 6.112, 115-16]).

²⁸² See *LSJ*, s.v. "κυνέη"; cf. Aristophanes, *Ach.* 390; Plato, *Resp.* 612b; Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.12; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.13.6.

I noted Smith's suggestion that Jesus becomes invisible/intangible (Luke 4:30; 24:31; John 7:30, 44; 8:20, 59; 10:39; 12:36) like Apollonius, Gyges, or anyone applying spells (e.g., Pliny, *Nat.* 37.165; cf. 28.115; 33.8; 37.158; *PGM* I.101-102, 196ff., 222ff., 247ff.; IV.2145ff.; V.488; VII.620ff.; XII.160ff., 173-74, 279; XIII.234ff., 267-68; XXIIa.11-12).²⁸³ Smith's cited *PGM* are third- to fifth-century CE handbooks containing prerequisite spells for various purposes, including invisibility and escape, most reflecting syncretism of ancient Mediterranean (including Christian) traditions and deities.

According to *PGM* I.42-195, a conjured invisible god (ἀφανής... ὁ θεός, 95) or 'aerial spirit' (πνεῦμά... ἀέριον, 97) 'frees from bonds a person chained, opens doors' (λύει δὲ ἐκ δεσμῶν [ἀ]λύσει φρουρούμενον, θύρας ἀνοίγει, 101), and 'causes invisibility so that no one can see you at all' (ἀμαυροῖ, ἵνα μηδεὶς [κ]αθόλου σε θεωρήσῃ, 102). After a prayer for deliverance (195-222), an invisibility spell (222-31) includes an adjuration to Helios to be made 'invisible' (ἀθεώρητόν) until sunset (229-30). Another invisibility spell (247-62) includes conjuring a δαίμων (253) to become 'invisible' (ἄφαντος, 255) until one wishes 'to be visible' (ἐμφαίνεσθαι, 258). *PGM* IV.2145-240 provides divine assistance using three Homeric verses (*Il.* 10.564, 521, 572) allowing a person to remain unfound, escape imminent death, or evade undesirable situations. *PGM* V.459-89 is a multi-purpose spell to gain favour or desires, and 'It loosens shackles, causes invisibility' (πέδας λύει, ἀμαυροῖ, 488). *PGM* VII.619-27 makes one 'invisible to everyone' (ἀθεώρητος... πρὸς πάντας, 621-22). *PGM* XII.160-78 grants deliverance from a locked location, loosens fetters, and causes invisibility, attributed to various gods. Lines 270-350 contain instructions for opening doors and breaking chains or rocks with a gem and invocation. *PGM* XIII.1-734 ("Eighth Book of Moses") contains a recipe to be 'invisible' (ἀθεώρητος, 236-37), with lines 268-69 invoking Darkness to 'hide' (κρύψον) the supplicant.

2.1.5. Supernatural Control

i. Supernatural Control in Homeric Epic

Homeric gods manipulate consciousness and perception. Despite Zeus' claim (somewhat contrastive to the *Iliad*) that mortals blame the gods for their own

²⁸³ See §1.1.2.ii. However, *PGM* XXIIa is medicinal without invisibility.

misfortunes (*Od.* 1.32-34), divine intervention and manipulation are evident throughout the *Odyssey*.²⁸⁴ Zeus lays desires upon hearts and ‘casts evil’ (κακὴν βάλεν) among Odysseus’ comrades (17.437-39; cf. *Il.* 20.242-43; τυφλόν/‘blindness’, 4.139-43; ἀάτη/‘delusion’, 19.86-96). Aphrodite induces ‘delusion’ (ἄτην) to lure Helen from her native land (*Od.* 4.261-62) and an Erinys puts ‘delusion’ (ἄτης) in Melampus’ mind (15.232-34). Athene and Hermes induce sleep and awaken mortals (1.363-64; 2.393-98; 5.47-48; cf. *Il.* 24.445-46). Athene influences Telemachus’ emotions and thoughts, putting (θήκε) might and courage into his heart and causing him to think (ὕπέμνησέν) of his father (*Od.* 1.320-22; cf. 3.75-76), either by supernatural placement or from their interaction (cf. *Il.* 5.513; 21.547; *H.H. Ap.* 463). The former is more likely since later she puts in Penelope’s heart to show herself to the suitors (*Od.* 18.158-60). Just prior, Athene ‘constrains’ (πέδησε) Amphinomus to be slain by Telemachus (18.155-56), a common expression for divine overruling of human will (cf. 3.269; 4.380; 23.353).²⁸⁵ She ‘urged on’ (ῥύτρυεν, 2.392) the suitors and caused their minds to wander (2.392-98). Later, she ‘incited’ (ῥύτρυε) laughter among them and ‘led their thoughts astray’ (παρέπλαγξεν... νόημα) (20.345-46). They laughed at the explanation that their behaviour was divinely caused since ‘a pernicious mist was spread upon them’ (κακὴ... ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀχλύς) (20.357).

‘Athene, standing near beside (ἄγχι παρασταμένη) Odysseus’, presumably invisible, ‘roused’ (ῥύτρυε) him to engage in a reconnaissance mission discerning between faithful and lawless compatriots whilst gathering bread (17.360-63; cf. *Il.* 2.446-58). Later, she prevents Penelope from understanding Eurycleia’s disclosure of Odysseus’ identity: ‘But, though face to face, she was neither able to observe nor to apprehend him (ἢ δ’ οὐτ’ ἀθρήσαι δύνατ’ ἀντίη οὐτε νοῆσαι); for Athene altered her mind (νόον ἔτραπεν)’ (*Od.* 19.478-79). Elsewhere, Penelope exclaims to Eurycleia,

...the gods made you mad (μάργην σε θεοὶ θέσαν), those who are also able to make senseless (δύνανται ἄφρονα ποιῆσαι) even ones who are exceedingly wise, and bring prudence upon the simple-minded; it is they who hinder (ἔβλαψαν) you, but before you were of a sound mind (φρένας αἰσίμη) (23.11-14).

²⁸⁴ Critics debate ‘divine justice’ in Homeric and other literature: Lloyd-Jones 1983; Clay 1983, 215-17 (followed by Crotty 1994, 132-33); Kullmann 1985; Versnel 2011, 151-237.

²⁸⁵ *LSJ*, s.v. “πεδάω”.

Statements that gods arouse or cause insanity not only express erraticism or irrationality, but the divine reputation of emotional and cognitive influence. Telemachus proclaims to the suitors, ‘...you are mad (μαίνεσθε), and no longer conceal with heart eating or drinking; some god now is surely rousing you (θεῶν νότις ὕμμι’ ὀροθύνει)’ (18.406-407). The divine ability of supernatural control is contrasted with Helen’s use of a ‘drug’ (φάρμακον) to make wedding celebrants apathetic hearing melancholy stories about Troy (4.219-32).²⁸⁶

Additional to invisibility, deities use mists for other purposes, including shedding ἠέρα to make mortals defensive (Zeus: *Il.* 17.268-70; cf. 17:366-83, 625-47) or to hinder deserters (Hera: 21.6-8). Gods draw νόξ to inhibit perception (Ares: 5.506-508) and cause destruction (Zeus: 16.567-68). Clouds/mists are removed from eyes to discern (γινώσκεις) deities and mortals (5.127-28; cf. 15.668-69). Poseidon sheds ἀγλὺν over Achilles’ eyes, presumably blinding him, and transports Aeneas over the battle (20.321-25). Divine mists also prevent interrogation, assailment, or recognition. Athene poured a ‘thick mist’ (πολλὴν ἠέρα, *Od.* 7.15, 140), ‘miraculous mist’ (ἀγλὺν θεσπεσίην, 7.41-42), or ‘divine mist’ (θέσφατος ἀήρ, 7.143) around Odysseus preventing Phaeacians from taunting him or enquiring of his identity (κερτομέοι τ’ ἐπέεσσι καὶ ἐξερείθ’ ὅτις εἴη, 7.17). ‘They did not apprehend him going down town among them’ (οὐκ ἐνόησαν ἐρχόμενον κατὰ ἄστῳ διὰ σφέας, 7.39-40) since Athene ‘did not permit it’ (οὐ... εἶα, 7.40-41). After he enters the palace and embraces Arete, the mist dissolves (7.143-45). Only the mist is invisible, not also Odysseus²⁸⁷ who must not respond to interrogations whilst following disguised Athene (7.14-36). Οὐκ ἐνόησαν (7.39) conveying cognitive rather than visual imperception is supported by Penelope’s inability to ‘apprehend’ Eurycleia’s statement that Odysseus stands before her (19.478-79). Athene makes Odysseus ‘unrecognisable’ (ἄγνωστον, 13.191) with a mist so that Ithacans might not ‘know’/‘perceive’ (γνοίη, 13.192) him until after delivering retribution (cf. *Il.* 24.334-98).

Deities manipulate situations to determine outcomes. According to Odysseus, gods ‘easily’ loosened his bonds and hid him from the Thesprotians (*Od.* 14.348-59).

²⁸⁶ Although gods also possess or utilise items (e.g., ῥάβδος/‘wand’; Hermes’ moly [*Od.* 10.302-306]; Hades’ cap), they are supernaturally elusive without aids.

²⁸⁷ Contra Garvie 1994, 171.

Athene causes Nausicaa's tossed ball to land near Odysseus, leading to their encounter (6.110-39). Nausicaa's fearful maidens flee, but she remains since the goddess 'put (θῆκε) courage in her heart and grasped (εἴλετο) fear from her limbs' (6.140). Finally, although Odysseus 'avoided' (ἀλεύατο) a thrown hoof (20.299-302; cf. 17.458-88, 489-91; 18.406-409), Athene determines the outcome of hurled javelins, making them fruitless (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐτώσια θῆκεν Ἀθήνη) so that they strike walls and pillars (22.256-59; ἀλεύαντο, 22.260; cf. *Il.* 20.438-41).²⁸⁸

ii. Supernatural Control in Euripides' *Bacchae*

In Euripides' *Bacchae*, Dionysus 'stings' (οἰστράω: 32-38, 119, 665; ἀνοιστρέω: 977-79; οἰστροπλήξ: 1229), 'shouts' (148-49, 151, 1078-89, cf. 689-90), 'leads' (ἄγω: 114-16, 412-16, 569-70, 804, 819-20, 855, 974, 1080; ἡγέομαι: 841, 920; κομίζω: 961; πομπός: 965, 1047; ἔξαρχος: 140-41; cf. with θίασος/χορός: 55-57, 379, 680-82), possesses (284, 298-300), and uses 'breath' (πνοή: 1093-94) to cause frenzy, delusion, or otherwise 'control' (κατέχω: 555, 1124) mortals.²⁸⁹ He punishes Pentheus by 'driving him out of his senses, implanting fickle madness' (ἐκστησον φρενῶν, ἐνεῖς ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν) to dress as a woman, since he would not 'if of good senses' (φρονῶν μὲν εὔ)... but if driven out of his senses' (ἔξω δ' ἐλαύνων τοῦ φρονεῖν) (850-53; cf. 359, 944-48).

The stranger submits to capture, though able to resist, escape, or foil Pentheus' contrivances (434-42), even hinting at his identity by claiming that he wilfully suffers or is liberated by Dionysus, that Pentheus leads away Dionysus in bonds, and that Dionysus will punish the king for insolence (498, 515-18). Yet, Pentheus remains oblivious (500-502). The bacchants' miraculous incarceration deliverance further evinces Dionysus' control (447-48):²⁹⁰

And fetters parted asunder of their own accord by themselves from their feet
(αὐτόματα δ' αὐταῖς δεσμὰ διελύθη ποδῶν) and keys opened doors without a
mortal hand (κλῆδές τ' ἀνῆκαν θύρετρ' ἄνευ θνητῆς χερός).

²⁸⁸ Some ancients rejected 22.257-59 as an interpolation (Murray 1995, 2:365 n. 9; Fernández-Galiano in Russo et al 1992, 266), but 22.256 is unaffected.

²⁸⁹ Leinieks 1996, 87-105. Cf. Lyssa/Madness, 'unseen' (ἄφαντοι), will possess Heracles' mind (*Her.* 873).

²⁹⁰ Cf. Ovid, *Metam.* 3.699-701 (a bacchant is incarcerated in Dionysus' place); Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 3.5.1; Nonnus, *Dion.* 45.228-84.

They call upon Dionysus (443) and wonders accompany the stranger's presence (449-50).

Dionysus eludes and controls Pentheus using illusionistic powers.²⁹¹ The stranger credits Dionysus for his escape involving an earthquake (604-607; cf. 585-641), admitting, 'I alone easily (ῥαδίως) saved myself without toil' (614),²⁹² baffling Pentheus who tied a bull instead (616-22, 642-50). Odes in the third stasimon delight in Dionysus' escape with imagery of a fawn eluding hunters followed by the revenge theme (862-911).²⁹³

The god obscures/controls (ἐκ Βακχίου κατείχετο) Agaue's mind (1123-24; cf. 1114-21)²⁹⁴ and endows her hands with superhuman strength or ease (εὐμάρειαν) to dismember Pentheus (1127-28) whom she fails to recognise (1139-43). Her gruesome conduct epitomises her delusion, but her mind is restored to recognise her slaughtered son (1269-89; cf. 1169-1215). Cadmus tells the bacchantes, 'You were maddened (ἐμάνητε), and the whole city was filled with bacchic frenzy (ἐξεβακχεύθη)' (1295; cf. 1302-1326).

Cognitive control differs from ignorance or self-induced incredulity. The stranger says that Dionysus is near and observing (500), but when Pentheus asks where Dionysus is and says that the god is not evident to his eyes (καὶ ποῦ ἔστιν; οὐ γὰρ φανερός ὄμμασίν γ' ἔμοις, 501) the stranger responds, '[He is] with me; but you, being profane, do not see him' (παρ' ἔμοι· σὺ δ' ἀσεβῆς αὐτὸς ὧν οὐκ εἰσορᾷς, 502). Pentheus' incredulity prevents recognition, a consequence of irreverence and Dionysus' vengeance.

Pentheus 'fights against a god' (θεομαχεῖ, 44-45; cf. 325, 1255) like others who 'speculate' (ἐνσοφιζόμεσθα, 200), impugning traditions (201-209). Dionysus says, 'though being a man, he dared to go into battle against a god' (πρὸς θεὸν γὰρ ὧν ἀνὴρ ἐξ μάχην ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησε, 635-36). Responding to Pentheus' resistance and threats, the stranger declares, 'I would happily sacrifice much to him rather than provoking him, kicking against the goads (πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζοιμι), mortal against god' (794-95). Pentheus will be unsuccessful and should submit to divine

²⁹¹ Segal 1982, 218-23.

²⁹² Hinting that he is the god (Seaford 1996, 200).

²⁹³ See Arthur 1972, 159-65.

²⁹⁴ See *LSJ*, s.v. "κατέχω".

sovereignty. After their dialogue (787-861), the chorus proclaims that it costs little to acknowledge (νομίζειν) the gods' strength (ἰσχὺν) and divine power (τὸ δαιμόνιον) (888-96), similar to the final ode declaring that the multiform gods find means to reverse expectations (1388-92; cf. *Alc.* 1159-63; *Andr.* 1284-88; *Hel.* 1688-92). Deities engage elusively in human affairs, exercising control and sovereignty, as the *Bacchae* exemplifies.

iii. Other Graeco-Roman Instances of Supernatural Control

Divinely induced visual or cognitive imperception is prevalent.²⁹⁵ Athene casts blinding thoughts over Ajax's eyes (δυσφόρους ἐπ' ὄμμασι γνώμας βαλοῦσα) to think he slaughters Atreidae whilst killing and abusing animals (Sophocles, *Aj.* 42, 51-65). The term γνώμας is best rendered 'thoughts' here, referring to "knowledge-based beliefs or opinions"²⁹⁶ She will show Ajax's 'madness' (νόσος, 66) to Odysseus, so he is not to worry: 'For I shall prevent (ἀπείρξω) the averted (ἀποστρόφους) beams of his eyes from seeing your appearance' (69-70). Ἀποστρόφους might signify directional diversion,²⁹⁷ but Athene tells Odysseus, '...he will not even see you, though being present nearby... I shall darken (σκοτώσω) his eyelids, though he sees clearly' (83, 85). She 'virtually' blinds Ajax.²⁹⁸ Odysseus utters a gnomic response: 'Indeed anything can happen if contrived by a god (θεοῦ τεχνωμένου)' (86). A similar phenomenon occurs when Athene appears to Odysseus (14-15): 'Voice of Athene... how intelligible, even if you are yet out of sight (κἄν ἄποπτος ἦς ὁμως), I hear your utterance and seize it in [my] mind'. Unless Athene is invisible, the same perceptual control is implied.²⁹⁹ Invisible *dramatis personae* nevertheless remain visible to the theatrical audience (cf. Eur., *Hipp.* 1440).

Petridou refers to the 'mental activity' of deities giving ideas to mortals, such as Artemis Aristoboule giving Themistocles an idea about battle tactics (Plutarch, *Her. mal.* 869c-d).³⁰⁰ Medea, disguised as a priestess, easily brings Pelias' daughters

²⁹⁵ See Weinreich 1909, 189-94; Buxton 1980; Hartsock 2008, 53-81; Tatti-Gartziou 2010.

²⁹⁶ Esposito 2010, 5 n. 24.

²⁹⁷ Finglass 2011, 158.

²⁹⁸ Esposito 2010, 7 n. 34.

²⁹⁹ Kamerbeek 1963, 22.

³⁰⁰ Petridou 2015, 135, cf. 132-33 (material evidence).

to her will and creates miracles from potions to deceive them (Hyginus, *Fab.* 24). Gods even drive other deities insane and cover their senses (Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 3.5.1). Ultimately, Greek gods are characterised by exceeding δύναμις or omnipotence, generally able to do what mortals cannot (cf. Plutarch, *Cor.* 38.4).³⁰¹

Common door or liberation miracles imply divine or numinous activity.³⁰² Apollo's temple doors open at his presence (Callimachus, *Hymn. Apoll.* 1-15). Hercules' Theban temple doors self-open among other phenomena (Cicero, *Div.* 1.34). Caesar's chamber doors self-open and the arms of Mars shake (Dio Cassius 44.17.2). Nero's chamber doors and doors of the mausoleum of Augustus self-open during the same night (63.26.5). Doors open from Medea's 'song'/'spell' (ᾠοῖδαῖς, Apoll. Rhod. 4.41-42). Mercury opens locked doors with his wand (Ovid, *Metam.* 2.818-19). When Apollonius frees his shackled leg, Damis considers his godlike (θεῖα) and superhuman (κρείττων ἀνθρώπου) nature (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 7.38; cf. 2.2; 8.13, 30).

Mortals, usually semi-divine or of ambiguous parentage, also exercise or mediate power for supernatural control. Kratz provides examples of figures exhibiting power over nature (e.g., Medea, Orpheus, emperors [Augustus, Caligula, Nero], Empedocles, Pythagoras, and Apollonius).³⁰³ Orpheus gains control over people, animals, and nature by song and lyre (Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1629-30; Eur., *Alc.* 328, 692; *Bacch.* 556; *Cycl.* 624; *Iph. aul.* 1211-14; Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 1.3.1-2; 1.9.25; Ovid, *Metam.* 10-11). Additional to controlling animals and nature, Pythagoras demonstrates simultaneous polylocality, is privy to information, and soothes body and soul (Plutarch, *Num.* 65; Iamblichus, *VP* 60-67, 134-36, 140-44; Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 23-31; Apoll. Paradox., *Hist. mir.* 6; cf. Diog. Laert. 8.1-54).³⁰⁴ His pupil Empedocles uses drugs to avoid illness and aging, manipulates climates, raises the dead, and claims to be deified (Diog. Laert. 8.55-77).³⁰⁵ Timolaus desires rings from Hermes which grant health, invisibility, flight, and manipulation of sleep, doors, and

³⁰¹ Henrichs 2010, 35-37 (along with immortality and anthropomorphism); Versnel 2011, 379-438; cf. Nägelsbach 1840, 18-29; Petridou 2015, 23.

³⁰² See Pervo's (1987, 27, 147 n. 15) examples.

³⁰³ Kratz 1979, 95-106; cf. divine and human water miracles: Yarbrow Collins 1994; Cotter 1999, 131-74.

³⁰⁴ See Tiede 1972, 14-20; Theissen 2007, 266.

³⁰⁵ See Tiede 1972, 20-22.

love (Lucian, *Nav.* 42). Pans attacking a hill fall, ‘being dumbfounded (ἐμβροντηθέντας) by the wise ones (τῶν σοφῶν)’ (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 3.13). Finally, as discussed, extant spells purportedly grant escape by appealing to higher powers (*PGM* I.101; IV.2145-240; V.488; XII.160-78).

2.1.6. Youth Acting Independently without Parental Knowledge

Graeco-Roman literature features youths acting independently or departing without parental knowledge. For example, Plutarch (*Alex.* 9.1-3) relates how sixteen-year-old Alexander colonised a land and participated in a battle without his father’s knowledge or explicit permission who was nevertheless pleased about the exploits. Notably, ancient authors and modern scholars alike have long recognised Telemachus’ journey as a coming of age or ‘education’ (παίδευσις)³⁰⁶ theme of the *Telemacheia*.³⁰⁷ Telemachus is around twenty years old (cf. 19.222), but lacks maturity. Athene tells him, ‘for it does not beseem you to practise childish (νηπιᾶας) ways, since you are no longer of such an age (τηλίκος)’ (1.296-97). Πᾶϊς and τέκνον references, especially in context of his journey, emphasise his youthfulness. Although these are also used for a generative sense, other terms often connote offspring (υἱός: 1.88, 217; 4.143; 16.339; γόνος: 1.216; 2.274; 4.207). Πᾶϊς is employed in relation to Telemachus’ secret departure (4.707, 665, 727) and return (4.808, 817; 16.17, 337; 17.38; cf. νήπιος, 4.818).³⁰⁸ Τέκνον is used in the vocative or as endearment for various characters (Athene, Nestor’s children, Penelope, Odysseus, and Telemachus) some twenty-six times, eleven applied to Telemachus relevant to his journey. Telemachus is called τέκνον by Eurycleia (2.363; 19.22; 20.135), Nestor (3.184, 254), Menelaus (4.78), Helen (15.125), Theoclymenus (15.509), Eumaeus (16.61), Odysseus (16.226), and Penelope (23.105). These contribute to his characterisation as a childish youth.

Telemachus’ maturation requires distancing from his mother, experiencing trials and adventures, and courageously exercising authority over his household.

³⁰⁶ Porphyry, *Apud scholia ad Odyssey* 1.284 (Petropoulos 2011, 106).

³⁰⁷ In ancient scholia see Wissmann 2009; Hunter 2015, 673-79.

³⁰⁸ Eumaeus relays the words of Penelope’s ‘beloved υἱός’ (16.339), but πᾶϊς (16.337) occurs in context of his return.

Unlike static characters, Telemachus grows.³⁰⁹ Athene could inform him of Odysseus' whereabouts, but divine βουλή ('counsel'/'plan') necessitates his experiential journey (2.372; cf. 1.252-305), so he voyages (sails: 2.413-34; rides a chariot: 3.491-97), hears war stories sitting and conversing with veterans (bks. 3-4), and achieves νόστος ('return' home).³¹⁰ Telemachus' journey gains him κλέος ('renown'), "a necessary qualification for the attainment of adult status in the heroic world (1.95),"³¹¹ and ἀρετή ('virtue'),³¹² making him more like his πολυμήχανος ('resourceful') father (cf. 1.203-205, 253-305).³¹³ He is concerned with his father's affairs and household (2.214-15; 3.83; cf. 2.262-66; 3.315-31), and he must be valiant (3.199-200) and accomplish his journey against the odds (4.657-72). Antinous hopes that Telemachus does not accomplish 'this journey' (ὁδὸς ἧδε) and is destroyed before reaching 'youthful prime' (ἦβης) (4.663-68). Telemachus is more intellectually prepared and emotionally confident after returning, but cunningly feigns immaturity.³¹⁴ Already before departing Telemachus asserts authority in his father's house, rebuking suitors who marvel at his courage and wisdom (1.269-74, 354-404). He sits in his father's seat (2.14) and stands to address the assembly (2.35-38).

Garland observes that Telemachus' maturation journey consists of confrontations and encounters moving outward from his household, beginning most crucially with distancing from his mother, then interactions with elders, Ithacans, and finally foreign kings.³¹⁵ Penelope is astonished and ponders her son's words when he corrects her and asserts his household authority (1.325-61; 21.343-55). Telemachus withdraws privately (2.260) then departs without her knowledge (2.411). Only Eurycleia knows, but he enjoins secrecy (2.358-80, 412). Penelope is distraught upon learning that her son slipped away (4.703-710). He returns home to complete his transition to adulthood (bk. 15; cf. 1.295-96; 3.199-200; 4.663-68). Penelope is

³⁰⁹ Millar and Carmichael 1954.

³¹⁰ Similarly, Clarke 1963.

³¹¹ Garland 1990, 172. The *Oresteia* myth exemplifies resistance (1.293-305; 3.301ff.; 4.511ff.; cf. 3.196 [παῖς]).

³¹² Clarke 1963, 130-33.

³¹³ D'Arms and Hulley 1946; Millar and Carmichael 1954; Rose 1967; Austin 1969.

³¹⁴ Austin 1969; Garland 1990, 170-71.

³¹⁵ Garland 1990, 172-73 (without typical sexual awakening).

distressed though relieved upon reuniting with him (17.36-44), exclaiming, ‘you departed... secretly, against my will, to hear about your beloved father’ (17.42-43).

Greek and Roman authors, additional to showing an awareness of the *Telemacheia* (e.g., *Telegony*; Hdt. 2.116.5; Eur., *Orest.* 588-90; Plato, *Leg.* 7.804a; Aristotle, *Poet.* 1461b; Strabo 7.7.11; 8.3.5; 8.5.8; 10.1.9; 10.2.24; Paus. 9.14.4; 10.14.2; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* V 182f-187a), perceived its maturation journey theme. Penelope writes to Odysseus in Ovid’s *Heroides* (*Penelope Ulixi* 1.98-116) worried about losing their ‘boy’ (*puer*) who journeyed to Pylos, commenting that he will attain ‘a stronger age’ only if surviving with his father’s help in whose ‘arts’ he ‘was educated’. Plutarch (*Cupid. divit.* 9) mentions Telemachus’ ‘inexperience’ (ἀπειρία) whilst visiting Nestor. Pseudo-Apollodorus (*Epit.* E 3.7-8) speaks of Telemachus as a παῖς snatched from Penelope’s bosom and held at sword-point by Palamedes in Odysseus’ presence. He also summarises how Telemachus aids his disguised father against the suitors (7.32-34).

2.2. Synthesis and Observations

We shall see how Luke’s reader invokes these conventions in my focal Luke-Acts passages, observing similarities and differences, including between Graeco-Roman figures and Jesus. I summarise here some significant observations from this compilation. Regarding [virtual] theoxenies, a visitor’s elusive presence is advantageous or detrimental, contingent on one’s treatment of their guest. Bierl observes that disguised visiting deities test and may punish mortals, writing, “The divine *parousia* is a paradoxical fact. On the one hand, closeness to a god who shows himself alive and real means that the person who experiences divinity is selected; on the other hand, closeness may mean serious danger and even death”.³¹⁶ Divine visitors reward or punish hosts more than do mortals, or at least aid mortals administering retribution (e.g., Zeus and Athene aiding Odysseus). Additionally, unlike mortals, divine visitors often depart supernaturally, further indicating their supramundane identities (e.g., Athene and Dionysus). The infrequency of epiphanic luminosity causing blindness suggests this result is intentional and exceptionally elusive. Although some humans of uncertain or divine parentage reflexively

³¹⁶ Bierl 2004, 44.

disappear/teleport or exhibit polylocality (e.g., Apollonius and Pythagoras), deities, translated humans, and otherworldly figures typically reflexively disappear concluding epiphanies, including in dreams or visions. Whereas divine figures are capable of reflexive invisibility and rendering others invisible, occasionally with mists or the cap of Hades, mortals are either made invisible by deities or otherwise utilise props or spells, relying on higher powers. Gods possess power to control mortals and situations, sovereignly determining outcomes, contrastive to impotent humans who are incapable of supernatural control without aid. Finally, we saw how the *Telemacheia* characterises Telemachus as a youth on a divine coming of age journey who must show initiative and elude his mother to act autonomously and authoritatively.

Our data consistently reveals that supramundane figures are reflexively/actively elusive, especially deities acting with ease by their own power. Some mortals or figures of potential divine parentage apparently demonstrate unaided invisibility, disappearance, and supernatural control, though most are passive or rely on numinous aid. Some divine figures are portrayed as elusive with multiple conventions, such as Athene in Homer's *Odyssey* and Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae* with disguised visitations, appearances and disappearances, invisibility or metamorphosis, and supernatural control. Additional to Athene's actions, virtual theoxenies of Odysseus and Telemachus as well as the latter's conduct in the *Telemacheia* form an elusiveness theme in the *Odyssey*. Dionysus' behaviour in the *Bacchae* led scholars to identify him as the elusive god *par excellence* of Greek mythology.³¹⁷ These modes of elusiveness in Graeco-Roman literature join with ancient Jewish modes (in the following chapter) forming an ancient Mediterranean repertoire to elucidate readings of my focal Lukan passages.

³¹⁷ Henrichs 1993; 2012, 461; Foley 1980, 112 (represented theatrically); cf. Segal 1982.

CHAPTER 3

ELUSIVENESS IN JEWISH LITERATURE

3.1. Ancient Jewish Literary Conventions of Elusiveness

This chapter presents Jewish literary elusiveness conventions. These, combined with Graeco-Roman data in the previous chapter, form an ancient Mediterranean extratext for consultation when reading my focal Luke-Acts passages. Some categories here overlap with Graeco-Roman ones: disguised or divine visitation and (in)hospitality, luminous epiphanies, reflexive disappearances, and supernatural control. Jewish accounts of independent youths journeying are not without parental knowledge (e.g., Isaac or Tobias), so this category is omitted here. Others are included, being unique to Jewish documents: divine hiddenness or concealment, elusive Wisdom, and theophanic traversal. Considering the following compilation overall—particularly with viewing biblical documents as a corpus (as would Luke and his ancient reader)—elusive characters (Yahweh, angels or other supramundane figures, and aided humans) and an elusiveness theme emerge.

3.1.1. Disguised or Divine Visitation and (In)hospitality

Like Graeco-Roman traditions, Jewish [virtual] theoxenic episodes are positive or negative.³¹⁸ Inhospitality or instruction against it is common (Gen 19:1-29; Jdg 4:17-22; 19:1-28; Wis 19:14-17; Sir 29:22-27; Philo, *Abr.* 1.107 [ἄξενος]; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.194 [μισόξενος]).³¹⁹ Whereas humans cosmetically disguise themselves or behave differently,³²⁰ supramundane figures visit in human guise.³²¹ Depictions of the angel of the Lord/Yahweh/God (pre-exilic) ambiguously imply

³¹⁸ Some episodes in this section are detailed in Letellier 1995; Denaux 1999; Arterbury 2003; 2005, 59-93; Jipp 2013, 131-70.

³¹⁹ Matthews 1991; 1992.

³²⁰ E.g.: Jacob (Gen 27:15-16); Joseph (Gen 42:7; cf. b. Yeb. 88a); Gibeonites (Jos 9:4-6); Jeroboam's wife (1 Kgs 14:1-6); a prophet (1 Kgs 20:37-43); king Ahab (1 Kgs 22:30; 2 Chron 18:29); David (1 Sam 21:10-15 [feigning insanity]); Saul (1 Sam 28:8). On biblical 'tricksters' see Niditch 2000 (often aided); Camp 1988 (Wisdom); Steinberg 1988; Engar (1990) examines tricky/deceptive heroines, including Jesus' ancestors (Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Tamar, Ruth, Moses' mother and sister, Tekoan women, Rahab, Jael, Judith, Esther); Frontain 1990 (David); Jackson 2002 (Lot's daughters and Tamar); 2012, 41-66.

³²¹ Cf. without hospitality: Gen 32:24-32; Exod 3:1-15; disguised epiphanies of Satan, God, angels, and Elijah in talmudic literature: b. San. 95a -96a; b. Ber. 6b; 58a.

angelomorphic theophanies, a precedent for archangels and other figures.³²² Thus, Yahweh (ὁ θεός) appears as three men to Abraham and Sarah (Gen 18:1-33). The narrator designates one of the figures as Yahweh/κύριος (18:13, 17, 20, 22, 26, 33), and later the other two speak of Yahweh's pending destruction (19:13-14; cf. 19:24 [dual Yahweh reference], 29). Either a theophany accompanies angelophanies or all three figures constitute a multi-angelomorphic theophany.³²³ Abraham runs to greet them, offers water to wash their feet, and urges them to rest whilst Sarah prepares food (18:2-8). Josephus says that Abraham thought they were ξένους and urged them to partake of ξενίας (*Ant.* 1.196). Concerned about consumption of human victuals, Philo (*Abr.* 118) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.197) ascribe this to pretence. One stranger pronounces a blessing that Sarah will bear a son (Gen 18:9-15), which Philo interprets as a reward for hospitality (*Abr.* 110). Eventually, Abraham escorts them towards Sodom (Gen 18:16, 20-21), though Yahweh (κύριος) remains present (18:22). Abraham becomes aware of his guest's divine identity by this time since he discusses the visitor's pending act of judgment (18:23-32).³²⁴ For Philo, Abraham considers his guests' heavenly identities after they ask if anything is too wonderful for the Lord (*Abr.* 112-13; cf. Gen 18:14). Finally, Yahweh (κύριος) departs concluding the visitation (Gen 18:33).

The narrative shifts to a second theoxenic episode with the two ἄγγελοι in Sodom (19:1-29). Lot extends hospitality, greeting the visitors, hosting them, washing their feet, and feeding them (19:1-3), but the men of Sodom are inhospitable, nearly sexually assaulting them (19:4-9). The angels punitively 'blind' the men whom Yahweh destroys, but reward Lot and his family by sparing them (19:10-25).³²⁵ According to Josephus, the men of Sodom 'hate strangers' (μισόξενοι, *Ant.* 1.194). Whereas God's unmediated visitation is beneficial in the previous narrative, his presence in Sodom as a final test results in judgment.³²⁶ The angels' departure is unrecorded.

³²² Dunn 1980, 149-59; 2010, 66-71; Mach 1992, 37-63; Gieschen 1998, 51-69; Hannah 1999, 19-20; Tuschling 2007, 93-113; Michalak 2012, 30-40.

³²³ Von Rad 1972, 204-206; Terrien 2000, 79-80.

³²⁴ Letellier 1995, 83-84.

³²⁵ Cf. 1 Clem. 11:1-2.

³²⁶ Von Rad 1972, 217.

The Abrahamic hospitality tradition remained popular in Jewish and Christian receptions (Philo, *Abr.* 107-132; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.196-98; Heb 13:2; 1 Clem. 10:7). It is taken up thematically in Testament of Abraham,³²⁷ though God sends the archangel Michael who appears as a traveller (1:1-2:1). Abraham proves to be a good host (2:2-6, 10-12; 3:6-7; 4:14-5:6); his custom is ‘meeting and receiving strangers’ (τοῖς ἐπιξένοις προσυπαντᾶν καὶ ἐπιδεχόμενος, [A] 2:2).³²⁸ Abraham notices the stranger’s tears turning into precious stones (3:11), but Sarah later realises he is an angel and tells her husband (6:1-13). Michael temporarily ascends to heaven concluding the visitation (8:1) then returns for Abraham’s heavenly journey.

In Tobit, the incognito angel Raphael accompanies Tobias on a journey (5:4-12:20).³²⁹ Tobias’ journey reflects an intertextual relationship with the *Telemacheia*, among other texts,³³⁰ and shows affinities with accounts of divinely intended endogamy where brides are acquired during journeys (Isaac: Gen 24; Jacob: Gen 28)³³¹ and with Isaac’s journey accompanying Abraham (Gen 22).³³² Tobias encounters Raphael whilst looking for a travelling companion to acquire assets in Media. Tobit and Tobias invite the visitor into their home, enquiring of his identity and lineage, so he claims to be their kinsman Azariah (Tob 5:5-14).³³³ Raphael liberates Sarah from the demon Asmodeus who slew her seven unconsummated grooms, allowing Tobias to marry her, and heals Tobit’s blindness (6:1-11:18). Tobit prepares a generous repayment for Raphael, but the angel reveals himself (12:1-15). Although God sends Raphael in response to Tobit’s and Sarah’s supplications, their alleviations are also rewards for obedience and piety (3:16-17; 11:1-12:3),³³⁴

³²⁷ Probable Greek originals of Jewish recensions date ca. 75–125 CE (Sanders 1983, 871-902) or the turn of the current era (Allison 2003, 34-40).

³²⁸ Cf. Philo, *Abr.* 114-18.

³²⁹ The Jewish composition Tobit is dated ca. second–third century BCE, with final redactions possibly taking place as late as the second century CE (Fitzmyer 2003, 50-54). I designate Tobit’s shorter and longer Greek texts by G^I and G^{II} (based primarily on 8) respectively, when these disagree, or specify other versions were pertinent. On Tobit’s textual history see Fitzmyer 2003, 3-28; Littman 2008, xix-xxv.

³³⁰ See §§1.1.2.i; 2.1.6.

³³¹ Von den Eynde 2005, 277-79.

³³² Novick 2007.

³³³ ‘Azariah’ meaning ‘Yahweh helped’ (Fitzmyer 2003, 184) emphasises God’s intervention through Raphael (Deselaers 1990, 96-97).

³³⁴ Whether suffering is from misfortune, alleviation involves Deuteronomic reciprocity (see Soll 1989; but cf. Portier-Young 2001; Kiel 2012).

including hospitality. Thus, Raphael was sent to test them (12:13 G^{II}/12:14 G^I). For Moore, this ‘test’ is unclear,³³⁵ but Raphael interacts as a guest, testing piety and hospitality. Moreover, Raphael either lies to remain disguised and test his hosts³³⁶ or is not deceitful by claiming to have visited Gabael, since he assumes Azariah’s entire persona.³³⁷ Disguised visitors nevertheless withhold their true identities, pretending to be real or fictitious persons. Raphael explains that he ate or drank nothing and they beheld a ‘vision’ (ὄρασιν, 12:19; cf. ἔφαγον, 6:6 G^I; but ἔφαγεν, 6:5 G^{II}).³³⁸ They are afraid, but he reassures them and departs to heaven, so they rejoice (12:16-22). Another visitation takes place during the journey when Raguel extends hospitality to Tobias and Raphael (6:10-10:11).³³⁹

A virtual theoxeny occurs with God’s visiting prophet (1 Kgs 17:8-24). A poor widow in Zarephath of Sidon hosts Elijah and feeds him bread with remaining ingredients (17:8-14). As a result, her meal and oil are undepleted for many days (17:15-16). She becomes convinced that Elijah is a man of God when he prays and her ill son is resuscitated (17:17-24). Similarly, a Shunammite woman is convinced that Elisha is a man of God and extends hospitality by feeding and hosting him whenever he passes through (2 Kgs 4:8-12). She is rewarded with a son (4:13-17). Although he later dies, Elisha revives him with God’s aid (4:18-37).³⁴⁰

Judith’s subversive visitation to Holofernes (Jdt 10-14) bears marks of a virtual theoxenic episode.³⁴¹ Her compatriots are unaware of her plan (8:34). She disguises herself as a seductress from her normal chaste behaviour and widow’s garb (10:1-8)³⁴² and journeys towards the enemy camp (10:9-12). Soldiers see her and enquire about her identity (10:12), but she partially reveals it, maintaining deceit

³³⁵ Moore 1996, 271.

³³⁶ Miller 2012.

³³⁷ Littman 2008, 99.

³³⁸ Although angels eat in OT narratives (Gen 18:8; 19:3), Michael receives God’s aid to eat in T. Ab. [A] 4:9-11, and Tob 12:19 Vulg. describes Raphael consuming ‘invisible food and drink which cannot be seen by men’ (Moore 1996, 272-73); cf. Fitzmyer 2003, 207, 297-98.

³³⁹ Arterbury 2005, 87.

³⁴⁰ Arterbury (2005, 84-86) includes these as hospitality scenes, but not virtual theoxenies.

³⁴¹ Judith is a Jewish composition dated ca. 120–80 BCE (Gera 2014, 26-44). Judith is dependent on Jdg 4:17-24 (Jael and Sisera) and resembles themes of sexuality and death, e.g., Jdg 16 (Samson and Delilah), Gen 34 (Dinah’s rape), Susanna, and Esther (Otzen 2002, 109-113).

³⁴² Gera 2014, 328.

(10:12-13). ‘Judith’³⁴³ is only employed by the narrator, notwithstanding the concluding song which she leads (16:6). She is otherwise referred to as a ‘Hebrew’ (Εβραῖος; 10:12; 12:11; 14:18). She is taken to Holofernes’ tent (10:14-23) who asks about her motives, treating her hospitably (11:1-4). She speaks wisely, but deceitfully, and her hosts marvel (11:5-23). Holofernes provides accommodation (12:1-11), also offering sexual intercourse (12:12-20). However, Judith decapitates him and departs, leaving her hosts to realise they were misled (13:1-10; 14:12-19).

Consonant with Graeco-Roman traditions, encountering the visiting divine presence is either favourable or unfavourable depending on one’s conduct or response. Unsurprisingly, throughout Jewish literature God’s ‘visitation’ (קָרָא/הִתְקַדְּשׁ; ἐπισκέπτομαι/ἐπισκοπή) expresses blessing and deliverance³⁴⁴ or retribution and judgment,³⁴⁵ so his manifest presence is beneficial or detrimental.

3.1.2. Luminous Epiphanies

Epiphanies of celestial figures are frequently luminous, including their garments or accompanying phenomena, though epiphanic luminosity is often not perceptually impairing. Yahweh is portrayed as interacting with people through a fiery anthropomorphic corporeality, similar to Mesopotamian deities and kings (Exod 3:2-3; 19:16; 24:1-18, 33-34; Jdg 6:12, 21-22; 13:20-21; 2 Kgs 2:11; Isa 6:1-6; 30:27; cf. Deut 4:12, 15, 24; 5:24; 32:22; 2 Sam 22:10; Ps 78:14; Job 29:3; Ezek 22:21-22).³⁴⁶ Light characterises his heavenly manifestation and dwelling (Deut 33:2; Pss 4:6; 27:1; 44:3; 89:15; 104:1-2; Isa 9:2; 60:1-3, 19-20; Mic 7:8; cf. Gen 15:17).³⁴⁷ Still, some mortals see God without visual impairment (Exod 24:9-11; 1 Kgs 22:19-

³⁴³ Judith (Ἰουδίθ/Ἰουδείθ/Ἰουδήθ/תִּיהִדִּיהַ/‘Jewess’) symbolises Israel (cf. 16:2) (Moore 1985, 179; Levine 1999; Gera 2014, 255).

³⁴⁴ Gen 21:1; 50:24-25; Ruth 1:6; 1 Kgs 2:21; Pss 8:5; 105:4; Job 7:18; Zeph 2:7; Ezek 34:11; Jer 15:15; 29:10; 36:10; 39:41; Jdt 8:33; 13:20; Wis 3:7; Pss. Sol. 3:11; 1Q28b III 2; 1QS IV 6; 4Q257 V 4 (possible); 4Q266 2 I 11; 4Q380 1 I 9; 4Q448 C 4.

³⁴⁵ Exod 32:34; 34:7; Pss 59:6; 17:3 (testing); 58:6; 88:33; Isa 10:3; 23:17; Jer 5:9, 29; 9:8, 24; 11:22; 30:2; 34:8; 36:31; 37:20; 43:31; 51:13, 29; Lam 4:22; Hos 4:14; Zech 10:3; Wis 14:11; Sir 2:14; 16:18; Pss. Sol. 9:4; 15:12; 1QH^a IX 17; 1QS II 6; II 14, 18; IV 11-14, 19, 26; 4Q266 3 III 24; 4Q286 7 II 4; 4Q416 1:9; 3:2; 7:2; 4Q417 1 I 8; 4Q418 43-45 I 5; 122 II + 126 II 9; 4Q423 5:4; CD-A V 14-16; VII 9, 21; VIII 1-3; CD-B XIX 6-15; 4Q266 1a-b:2. See *ThWQ*, s.v. “קָרָא,” 3:321, 323-24; Hermann W. Beyer, “ἐπισκέπτομαι, ἐπισκοπέω, ἐπισκοπή,” *TDNT* 2:599-608.

³⁴⁶ Grant 2015; cf. Cassin 1968.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Rev 21:23-24; 22:5. The [often synonymous] terms קְבוֹד, תְּפִאָּרָה, הוֹד, הִדְרָה translated δόξα (OG) and *gloria* (Vulg.) convey God’s effulgence (Terrien 2000, 145).

23//2 Chron 18:18-22; Isa 6:1-6; Amos 7:7; Hab 3:3-6). Moses sees God's passing glory rather than his 'face' (i.e., presence), leaving his countenance so glorious that he must veil it, though it does not blind or inhibit others (Exod 33:18-23; 34:5-8, 29-35). LAB 12:1 relays, 'And he was perfused with invisible light (*lumine invisibili*)... the light of his face surpassed the splendour of the sun and moon'.³⁴⁸ The Israelites see him, but do not recognise him (*videntes non cognoscebant eum*), just as Joseph's brothers did not recognise him (*non cognoverunt eum*). Moses realises that his face (*facies; faciem*) is glorious (*gloriosissima*) and veils it (cf. 19:16). The *lumine invisibili* is not undetectable light, but unbearable light.³⁴⁹

Ezekiel falls facedown in fear and reverence hearing an epiphanic voice and seeing an enthroned luminous anthropomorphic figure, the likeness of the Lord's glory (Ezek 1:4-2:2; cf. 3:21-23; 8:4; 10:4; 43:2-6; 44:4). Similarly, Daniel sees *παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν/רִמְיָהוּ קִיָּא* (presumably God) in a dream-vision wearing white garments, sitting on a fiery throne with burning wheels and fire issuing from his presence (Dan 7:9-10). The Book of Parables takes up this tradition where the 'Head of Days' has a head like white wool and indescribable apparel (1 En. 71:10), accompanied by a Son of Man figure whose 'face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels' (46:1).³⁵⁰ According to the Book of the Watchers, light appearing on the elect accompanies God's eschatological manifestation (1:4-9), though possibly figurative of revelatory wisdom (3:6-8). Although Enoch becomes afraid and falls due to a vision (14:1-14), a clear instance of unbearable luminosity follows as he or any flesh is unable to see or to approach the luminous enthroned Great Glory due to honour and glory, so Enoch keeps his face bowed and only hears the Lord's voice (14:18-15:1). In Enoch's Dream Visions, the Lord of the sheep has a face that is 'dazzling and glorious and fearful to look at' (89:22; cf. 89:31). Finally, people hide from the great glory of theophanic judgment in the Epistle of Enoch (102:3).

³⁴⁸ LAB is a Jewish composition, probably originally in Hebrew, dated ca. first to second century CE (Murphy 1993, 6; Jacobson 1996, 1:199-211).

³⁴⁹ See Jacobson 1996, 1:482.

³⁵⁰ 1 Enoch references imply subdivisions: Book of the Watchers (chs. 1-36); Similitudes of Enoch (chs. 37-71); Book of Luminaries (chs. 72-82); Book of Dreams (chs. 83-90, including "Animal Apocalypse" [chs. 85-90]); Epistle of Enoch (chs. 91-105, including "Apocalypse of Weeks" [91:11-17; 93:1-10]); Birth of Noah (chs. 106-107); and Another Book by Enoch (ch. 108) (see Nickelsburg and VanderKam 2012, 1-13 [dating the first five pre-first century CE]).

Fire and lightning characterise angelic figures in Ezekiel’s vision (Ezek 1:4, 13; cf. 9:2-3). Daniel sees another anthropomorphic figure with luminous features in a vision, but his fearful companions run and hide (Dan 10:1-10). He falls facedown hearing the sound of the figure’s words, but is raised up (10:9-10). He averts attention in fear, but is strengthened (10:15-19). Josephus says that Daniel fell ‘being troubled’ (ταραχθείς, *Ant.* 10.269). This is similar to the luminous angelophany to Aseneth who falls in fear and is commanded to stand (Jos. *Asen.* 14:1-12; cf. 15:12).³⁵¹ According to the Similitudes of Enoch, angels have radiant faces that shine like the snow (1 En. 71:1). The Birth of Noah speaks of the baby Noah’s white hair, white and red complexion, sunbeam-like eyes, and glorious countenance as superhuman, angelic traits (106:1-12).³⁵² So too the early Christian text 2 Enoch describes angels’ faces as shining like the sun, among other radiant features (1:5; 19:1; cf. 20:1-2).³⁵³ Testament of Job³⁵⁴ describes an angel as a light and voice speaking to Job in a dream-vision (3:1-7; 4:1; cf. 5:2), during which Job falls in reverence (3:4). In Testament of Abraham, Isaac sees a luminous man (ὁ ἀνὴρ ὁ φωτοφόρος, [A] 7:3; ἀνὴρ παμμεγέθης λίαν λάμπων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ὡς φῶς [καλούμενος] πατὴρ τοῦ φωτός, [B] [E] 7:6) sent from God to retrieve Abraham’s life (cf. [B] 5:2; [A] 14:8). Elsewhere, enthroned Abel is like the sun ([A] 12:5; 13:2) sitting between the angel of light Dokiël and the fiery angel Puruel ([A] 12:9-10, 14; 13:1, 10-11). Even Death is disguised as an angel of light, donning a garment of luminous glory ([A] 16:6-16; 17:12).³⁵⁵

A theophany occurs of a horseman and two men with dazzling attire who chastise Heliodorus (2 Macc 3:24-30).³⁵⁶ Later, a horseman appears ‘in white clothing brandishing gold weapons’ (11:8). These accounts probably influenced 4 Macc 4:1-

³⁵¹ Joseph and Aseneth is likely a Jewish composition dated ca. 100–115 CE (Docherty 2004, 31-33).

³⁵² Cf. 1QapGen ar II; Rev 10:1.

³⁵³ Christian influence in 2 Enoch suggests a post-first-century CE date, as late as the medieval period (Andersen 1983, 94-97; Macaskill 2013, 3), though some composite parts could be pre-70 CE (see contributions in Orlov and Boccaccini 2012 [especially Orlov and Suter]).

³⁵⁴ Testament of Job is probably a Jewish text composed in Greek ca. 200 BCE–200 CE with later Christian editing (Spittler 1983, 833-34; 1989; cf. Haralambakis 2012, 1-24).

³⁵⁵ Likely a Christian interpolation (cf. 2 Cor 11:14).

³⁵⁶ Composite parts of the extant Jewish text 2 Maccabees are typically dated ca. 200 BCE–70 CE (Schwartz 2008, 3-16; Doran 2012, 14-17).

14 where angels on horseback with ‘lightning flashing’ (περιαστράπτοντες, 4:10) from their weapons appear to Apollonius and his army.³⁵⁷ In *Story of Zosimus*,³⁵⁸ Zosimus becomes terrified and falls, his eyes dimming from fear, after encountering a Rechabite with a face like an angel’s and clothing like lightning, but the Rechabite stands him up to converse (5:1-6:3). Later, a shining light accompanies an angel unroofing the structure of a guardhouse to free incarcerated Rechabites (10:1-6). According to most Greek manuscripts of *Apocalypse of Moses*,³⁵⁹ Eve sees a heavenly luminous chariot carried by radiant eagles whose glory is indescribable and whose faces mortals cannot look upon (33:2).³⁶⁰ In *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*,³⁶¹ Zephaniah falls facedown and worships the angel Eremiel thinking it is the Lord with a face shining like the sun in perfect glory, a golden girdle, and feet like bronze in melted fire (6:11-15; cf. 6:5-10).³⁶² *Lives of the Prophets*³⁶³ describes white-shining men at Elijah’s birth whom his father sees wrapping Elijah in fire and feeding him flames (22:1-3). Even righteous humans are made luminous with divine light (Dan 12:3; 1 En. 39:7; 50:1; 104:2; 2 Bar. 51:3, 5, 10; 4 Ezra 7:97, 125) or clothed with a glorious garment (1 En. 62:15-16; cf. 90:31-32; 2 En. 22:8-10).³⁶⁴ For example, in the *Book of Parables* the Lord of Spirit’s light will appear on the faces of the holy at which judged sinners cannot look (1 En. 38:4). Finally, in *Apocalypse of Abraham*³⁶⁵

³⁵⁷ Cf. Matt 28:3; T. Levi 8:2. The Jewish composition 4 Maccabees is dated ca. first century CE (deSilva 1998, 14-18; 2006, xiv-xvii).

³⁵⁸ Although Charlesworth (1985, 444-45) sees an original Jewish document composed ca. first–fourth century CE with Christian redactions (chs. 3-15) and interpolations (chs. 19-23), others observe composite Christian documents, namely *History of the Rechabites* (chs. 8-10; ca. post-200 CE) interpolated into *Story of Zosimus* (Knights 2014; cf. 1993; 1995; 1997a; 1997b; 1998; Nikolsky 2002, 204).

³⁵⁹ Johnson (1985, 251-52) dates a Hebrew original ca. first century BCE–second century CE with Greek and Latin translations ca. fourth century CE, but de Jonge (2003, 181-200) advocates a non-Semitic (Greek) Christian composition.

³⁶⁰ Some MSS omit the ‘faces’ detail (see Johnson 1985, 287; Tromp 2005, 161).

³⁶¹ This Jewish text (ca. first century BCE/CE) lacks apparent Christian redaction (Wintermute 1983, 500-501).

³⁶² Angelic thrones in the fifth heaven are brighter than the sun (Apoc. Zeph. in Clement, *Strom.* 5.11.77).

³⁶³ Despite strictly Christian preservation and redactions, this is likely a first-century CE Jewish composition in Greek (Torrey 1946, 3-17; Knibb 1980, 197 [cf. 1985]; Hare 1985, 380-81; Schwemer 1995–1996, 1:65-71; 2020; cf. Satran 1995, 1-8 [doubting Jewish origin]).

³⁶⁴ Cf. 1 Cor 15:51-54; 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:21.

³⁶⁵ Confidently dated ca. 70–early-second century CE (Box and Landsman 1919, xv-xvi; Rubinkiewicz 1983, 683).

the luminous-featured Iael/Yahoel (10-11) raises frightened Abraham to his feet and guides him on a heavenly journey during which he sees a fire and transforming people within a strong and indescribable light then cannot see as he grows weak (15-16). Nevertheless, Abraham's loss of sight is likely from exhausted human limitations, hence requiring the angel's strengthening aid.

Angelic luminosity or glory is an extension of and contingent on [relational proximity to] divine luminous glory (cf. Tob 12:15; Rev 15:5-8).³⁶⁶ As in Graeco-Roman literature, Jewish traditions familiar in the first century CE seldom depict epiphanic luminosity as blinding or impairing, even if occasionally unbearable to gaze upon (1 En. 14:18-15:1; 38:4; LAB 12:1; Apoc. Mos. 33:2; Apoc. Ab. 15-16 [possible]).³⁶⁷ Furthermore, witnesses prostrate in fear or reverence and are normally aided to stand.³⁶⁸

3.1.3. Reflexive Disappearances

Although post-translation disappearances are absent in ancient Jewish documents,³⁶⁹ supramundane figures' reflexive supernatural departures are common. Interpreting disappearances in most accounts is warranted.³⁷⁰ Theophanies to Abraham and to Jacob conclude when God 'went up' (ἀνέβη) from them (Gen 17:22; 35:13). Ἀναβαίνω (אָנָבִינָה HB) indicates a heavenly return rather than an observable ascension, so an intermediate disappearance may be concomitant.³⁷¹ Although the narrative of Jacob wrestling with a heavenly figure does not include the latter's departure (32:24-32), Josephus supplies an explicit *aphaneia*: 'And when the

³⁶⁶ Similarly, de Long 2017, 83-85, 90-92 (notwithstanding metaphors: Esther 5:2 LXX; 1 En. 106:5); cf. Mach 1992, 58-59, 262-64.

³⁶⁷ In the late Merkabah-mystical text 3 Enoch (ca. fifth–sixth century CE; Alexander 1983, 225-29; 1987; cf. Schiffman 2005), Enoch falls partly due to angels' luminous eyes (1:6-10), prostrated angels cannot look at Metatron's luminous crown (14:5; cf. 15:1-2), and Seraphim radiate light that could blind other holy creatures (22:11); cf. 18:25; 22:1-10; 26:7; 35:2.

³⁶⁸ See also: Lev 9:24; Num 20:6; Jos 5:14; 1 Kgs 18:38-39; Dan 8:17-18; Tob 12:15-17; 1 En. 14:1-14; 60:3-4; 2 En. 1:6-8; 21:2-3; 22:4-5; 4 Ezra 4:11-12; 5:14-15; 10:29-33; Jub. 53:19; T. Ab. [A] 3:5-6; Apoc. Ab. 10:1-3; Ascen. Isa. 7:21; Matt 17:5-8; 28:1-5; Rev 1:17; 22:8-9; ambiguous cases, with or without luminosity: Gen 17:3; Jdg 13:20-23; 1 Chron 21:16; Jub. 15:3-6, 17; 1 En. 65:4; 71:11; 2 Bar. 13:1-2; T. Ab. [A] 9:1-3; 18:10.

³⁶⁹ Including in later literature (Elijah: b. Ber. 3a; 6b; 58a). An exception may be Rev 11:12. Cf. Zwiep 1997, 36-79 (translations).

³⁷⁰ Lohfink (1971, 70-72, 75, cf. 170 n. 17) discusses some following examples as ascensions.

³⁷¹ For the Hebrew, Speiser (1964, 126) sees 'suddenness' in 17:22 and Hamilton (1990/1995, 1:479, 2:382) determines disappearances in both (cf. Ezek 11:23-24; Pss 47:6; 68:19).

appearance (φάντασμα) said these things, it became vanished (ἀφανὲς γίνεται)’ (*Ant.* 1.333).³⁷² This addition is congruent with the Jacob cycle’s (Gen 25-35) theme of God’s paradoxical presence and absence.³⁷³ A theophany to Jacob in Jubilees concludes not with an *aphaneia*, but God ‘went up from him. And Jacob watched until he went up into heaven’ (32:20). Jacob spectating indicates a gradual ascension, omitted in other departures (15:22; 32:26).

An angel of the Lord ‘appeared’ (ὤφθη, *Jdg* 6:12) to Gideon and later ‘departed from his eyes’ (ἀπῆλθεν ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ, [A] 6:21; ἐπορεύθη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ, [B]).³⁷⁴ Gideon recognises from this departure that he has seen the angel of the Lord face-to-face, but God reassures him that he will not die (6:22-23). The detail ‘from his eyes’, the reaction, the recognition, and an *inclusio* formed with the appearance all imply an *aphaneia*,³⁷⁵ ascension, or both. Similarly, an angel of the Lord ‘appeared’ (ὤφθη) to Manoah’s wife (13:3), apparently departs, and ‘arrives’ (παρεγένετο, 13:9) again to reiterate his prophecy to the couple (13:10-14). No departure is mentioned as she hurries to tell Manoah (13:6-8), but Josephus records that the angel ‘departed’ (ἔχετο, *Ant.* 5.278). When asked his name, the angel cryptically replies that it is ‘wonderful’ (θαυμαστόν, *Jdg* 13:18), an ‘evasive’³⁷⁶ or ‘enigmatic’³⁷⁷ answer implying human incomprehension, then Manoah offers a sacrifice ‘to the Lord who works wonders’ (τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ θαυμαστὰ ποιοῦντι, [A] 13:19), suggesting an angelomorphic theophany. The angel ‘went up’ (ἀνέβη) in the ‘ascending’ (ἀναβῆναι) of the flame (13:20) and no longer ‘appeared’ (ὀφθῆναι) to them, but they ‘knew’ (ἔγνω) it was an angel of the Lord by this departure (13:21). Manoah is afraid they will die having seen God, but his wife reassures him that the Lord accepted their offering (13:22-23). Elements correspond with the typical theoxenic scheme. Thus, Josephus recounts this story saying that Manoah offers the

³⁷² Cf. ‘angel of the Lord’ (Tg. Onq. Gen 32:31); ‘Michael’ (Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 32:25).

³⁷³ See Walton 2003; cf. Anderson 2011 (God as deceptive trickster to fulfil the Abrahamic promise).

³⁷⁴ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי (6:21); cf. 6:14, 16 (הַיְהוָה/ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου).

³⁷⁵ Interpreting disappearance: Boling 1975, 133; Soggin 1981, 122; Sasson 2014, 336; Nelson 2017, 132.

³⁷⁶ Webb 2012, 356.

³⁷⁷ Niditch 2008, 146.

visitor ξένιος (*Ant.* 5.282 [x2]).³⁷⁸ Josephus says, ‘the angel, rising (ἀνιών) into heaven through the smoke as a vehicle, was manifest to them’ (*Ant.* 5.284). Manoah was afraid of being harmed ‘from the outward appearance (τῆς ὄψεως) of God’, but his wife says that ‘God was seen (ὀραθῆναι) by them’ for their advantage (5.284). According to LAB, the angel ascends with the flame (*ascendit ab eo cum flamma ignis*, 42:9) and Manoah sees God face-to-face in the angel Phadabel (42:10). In all three accounts the angel disappears,³⁷⁹ ascending within the flame/smoke.

After Raphael reveals himself (Tob 12:6-16), he says that he is ascending (ἀναβαίνω) back to the one who sent him, then ‘he went up’ (ἀνέβη, 12:20). Against Zimmermann’s speculation that the original Aramaic intended a disappearance,³⁸⁰ an extant Hebrew fragment connotes reflexive or passive ascension (והעלהו, 4Q200 6:1), which, Fitzmyer explains, either implies God as the subject or is “a hiphil of על with a pronominal suffix used in a reflexive sense (lit. ‘he caused him [= himself] to go up’)” (cf. Sir 7:7, 16; Ezek 29:3).³⁸¹ Again, ascension terminology conveys heavenly return, but the detail ‘they no longer saw him’ (οὐκέτι εἶδον αὐτόν, 12:21) suggests a concomitant *aphaneia*. An angelophany to Aseneth (Jos. Asen. 14:1-17:5) concludes when ‘the man departed (ἀπῆλθεν) from her eyes, and Aseneth saw what appeared to be a chariot of fire being taken up into the heaven to the east’ (17:6).³⁸² They are inside an enclosed space (cf. 16:17; τὸν θάλαμον, 17:3) and the departure is qualified by ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῆς, implying disappearance followed by ascension in the fiery chariot.

God ‘made a great appearance’ (ἐπιφάνειαν μεγάλην ἐποίησεν, 2 Macc 3:24) of an armoured horseman and two youths who flog Heliodorus nearly to death (3:25-32). The youths ‘appeared’ (ἐφάνησαν, 3:33) again to tell Heliodorus, whom heaven flogged (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ³⁸³ μεμαστιγωμένος), to report God’s power, then ‘they became vanished’ (ἀφανεῖς ἐγένοντο, 3:34). Since the Lord manifests (τοῦ παντοκράτορος

³⁷⁸ See Arterbury 2005, 78-79.

³⁷⁹ So Butler 2009, 329 (Judges account).

³⁸⁰ Zimmermann 1958, 112, 148.

³⁸¹ Fitzmyer 2003, 298; cf. Moore 1996, 273.

³⁸² Cf. 2 Kgs 2:11.

³⁸³ An epithet for God (cf. Mark 11:30; Luke 15:18-21; see *BDAG*, s.v. “οὐρανός”).

ἐπιφανέντος κυρίου, 3:30; cf. 3:36), the figures constitute an angelomorphic theophany concluding with an *aphaneia*.

The Greek of 4 Baruch³⁸⁴ uses ἀπῆλθεν for the Lord departing from Jeremiah (1:12) and for an angel of the Lord departing from Baruch (6:18). The Lord also ‘went up (ἀνέβη) from Jeremiah into heaven’ (3:17). The identity of the angel of the Lord is ambiguous, but he appears by self-initiative (6:2, 15) unlike angels commanded by the Lord (3:4-5). These expressions imply sudden heavenbound disappearances, not gradual ascensions.³⁸⁵

Concluding his visit to Abraham, Michael ‘went out’ (ἐξῆλθεν, T. Ab. [E] [A] 4:4; ἐξελθών, [B]) from the house and ‘was taken up’ (ἀνελήφθη, [E] [B])/‘went up’ (ἀνῆλθεν, [A] 4:5) into heaven.³⁸⁶ According to shorter recensions ([E] [B]), Michael could be assumed by an unstated agent. Contrastively, the *lectio longior* depicts Michael’s reflexive departure ‘in a twinkling of an eye (ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ) and he stood before God’ ([A] 4:5).³⁸⁷ He suddenly vanishes with ἀνῆλθεν referring to his heavenly return and/or ascending disappearance. Michael comes again to Abraham’s house (5:1), then ‘departed’ (ἀπῆλθεν, [E] 8:1; ἀπελθόντος, [B])/‘went up’ (ἀνῆλθεν, [A]) into heaven. The longer text adds ‘immediately he became vanished’ (εὐθέως ἀφανῆς ἐγένετο, [A]). In a third instance, Michael appears to Abraham ([A] 9:1) then ‘departed’ (ἀπῆλθεν, [A] 9:7) back to God. Later (Christian) [A] variants demonstrate early interpretations of sudden disappearances in earlier recensions.

In Apocalypse of Moses, Michael ‘departed’ (ἀπῆλθεν, 14:1) concluding an angelophany to Eve and Seth, and after coming again to bury Eve he ‘went up into heaven’ (ἀνῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, 43:4).³⁸⁸ Elsewhere, Eve recounts a more explicit *aphaneia* when the serpent—influenced and controlled by the devil (16:1-4; 17:2, 4)—convinced her to eat the forbidden fruit (15:1-20:3), then ‘descended from the

³⁸⁴ The Jewish composition of 4 Baruch (whether a Semitic language or Greek) dates ca. late-first century CE–early-second century CE with Christian redactions (Robinson 1985, 414; Herzer 2005, xxx-xxxvi; Allison 2019, 24-34, 57-66).

³⁸⁵ Cf. Michael ‘departed’ (ἀπῆλθεν)/‘went up’ (Slavonic trans. Kulik) and is suddenly in God’s presence during Baruch’s heavenly journey (3 Bar. 14:1-2). 3 Baruch’s provenance and date are indeterminate, but a third-century CE *terminus ad quem* is probable and Christian influence is less apparent in the Slavonic text (Gaylord 1983, 655-56; Harlow 1995; 2001; Kulik 2010, 11-15).

³⁸⁶ For Lohfink (1971, 72), exiting prior supports an ascension.

³⁸⁷ Allison (2003, 138) cautions against assuming that this Semitism is a Christian interpolation (cf. 1 Cor 15:52) due to similar rabbinic expressions cited in Kerkeslager 1999, 70-71.

³⁸⁸ The text’s ending contains Christian influence.

tree and became vanished (ἄφαντος ἐγένετο)’ (20:3). T. Job 8:1 implies a sudden or gradual ascension with Job mentioning that Satan ‘went away’ (ἀπέστη) from him, ‘departing under the firmament’ (ἀπελθὼν ὑπὸ τὸ στερέωμα).³⁸⁹ In Stor. Zos. 20:1, angels accompanying Zosimus ascend (ἀναβάντων), but no further details are given. In 2 Enoch, after ‘two men’ (angels) carry Enoch to the seventh heaven, they ‘departed from him invisibly’ ([J] 21:1, trans. Andersen). A sudden vanishing is evident since Enoch is terrified and says, ‘the men went away from me, and from then on I did not see them anymore’ ([A] [J] 21:2, trans. Andersen).

Jewish texts are less explicit than Graeco-Roman texts in describing epiphanic conclusions as disappearances. Jewish accounts often employ ascension terminology implying heavenly returns, sometimes conjunctive with details about departing from a spectator’s presence or eyes, or no longer seeing the figure. Nevertheless, some later documents use unequivocal disappearance terminology.

3.1.4. Invisibility

Supramundane figures are capable of invisibility, including to selective persons.³⁹⁰ Angels aiding or visiting mortals is pervasive,³⁹¹ several instances implying [selective] invisibility. Balaam cannot initially see ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ/κυρίου on the road, unlike his donkey (Num 22:22-35). Ps 34:7 may express angelic invisibility: ‘An angel of the Lord will encircle round about the ones who fear him and he will deliver them’ (cf. 4Q434 1 I 12). Likewise, Ps 90:11-12 states, ‘For he (God) will command his angels concerning you, to protect you in all your ways, they will take you up on their hands lest you strike your foot against a stone’.³⁹² Angels invisibly pass through Jerusalem in judgment (Ezek 9:1-11). An angelic figure in Daniel’s vision is invisible to others (Dan 10:1-10). Elisha prays and the

³⁸⁹ Cf. the polymorphous and selectively (in)visible devil vanishes (Acts Thom. 46).

³⁹⁰ On later invisibility accounts see Ginzberg 1909–1938 (general: 2:261, 4:5 n. 13, 4:25, 4:391, 5:396; Elijah: 4:232, 6:338 n. 103; using charms: 6:171-72 n. 13).

³⁹¹ Gen 19; 24:7, 40; 31:11; 48:16; Exod 23:20, 23; 32:24; 33:2; 1 Kgs 19:5-8; 2 Kgs 19:35//Isa 37:36 (cf. Sir 48:21; 1 Macc 7:41; 2 Macc 15:22-23); 2 Chron 32:21-22; Ps 34:7; Dan 3:28; 6:22; Tob 5-12; 2 Macc 11:6, 8; 3 Macc 6:18-21; 4 Macc 4:10; Ep Jer 1:7; Pr Azar 1:26; T. Jud. 3:10; T. Naph. 8:4; 1QS III 24-25; 1Q28a II 8-9; 1QM VII 6; XII 8; XIII 10; 4Q491 1-3:3, 10; 11Q14 1 II 14-15; see Walsh 2020 (Qumran).

³⁹² Cf. Ps 35:5-7; Isa 63:9.

Lord opens his servant's eyes to see a fiery heavenly army, invisible to advancing Arameans (2 Kgs 6:8-23).

According to Job 9:11, people may fail to perceive theophanies. The light of God's manifestation as a flaming torch makes the Israelites visually undetectable to pursuers in Wis 18:1-4, though perhaps an obstruction.³⁹³ In 3 Macc 6:18 heavenly gates open as God reveals his face and two angels descend 'manifest to all but the Jews/Judeans' (φανεροὶ πᾶσιν πλὴν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις).³⁹⁴ Philo says that a divine or superhuman appearance will guide the diaspora, 'invisible (ἀδύηλον) to others, but manifest (ἐμφανοῦς) only to those being rescued' (*Exsecr.* 165). Finally, Goliath's eyes are opened to see the invisible angel aiding David's slaughter (LAB 61:8). Thus, supramundane figures in Jewish literature exercise [selective] invisibility attesting to their otherworldly nature, like in Graeco-Roman documents.³⁹⁵

3.1.5. Divine Hiddenness or Concealment

Yahweh hides or conceals himself, so his presence becomes unperceivable or inaccessible. He warns of turning away his face ([ἀπο]στρέφω + πρόσωπόν) or hiding his face (פָּנָה + סָתַר) from Israel due to sin (Deut 31:17-18; 32:20). The divine face-turning/face-hiding motif occurs in the prophets where misconduct results in punitive consequences or seemingly unalleviated suffering (Mic 3:4; Isa 8:17; 59:2; Jer 33:5; Ezek 39:24). Occasionally, 'hiding' is expressed with κρύπτω (Job 13:24; 34:29) and 'turning' is attested with פָּנָה + סָתַר (Ezek 7:22). Although Tob 13:6 is the only other OG instance using 'hide' rather than 'turn [away]' (cf. 3:6; 4:7), fragmented Aramaic Tobit (4Q196-4Q200) partially preserves 4:7 which undoubtedly uses סָתַר (4Q200 2:6-7).³⁹⁶ 'Turn the face' mostly replaced 'hide the face' in OG and OTP&A.³⁹⁷

³⁹³ Wisdom of Solomon is a Jewish composition in Greek from ca. second century BCE–first century CE (Harrington 1999, 55-56; Murphy 2002, 83-84).

³⁹⁴ 3 Maccabees is a Jewish composition in Greek from Egypt ca. 217 BCE–70 CE (Anderson 1985, 510-12; Croy 2006, xi-xiv).

³⁹⁵ Jewish supramundane beings are normally visible and material, so other expressions of 'invisibility' pertain more to their unseen heavenly dwelling. Even until rabbinic times, the corporeal God may be seen exclusively, but not represented visually (Moore 1996; Costa 2010). God in Acts is represented as corporeal and material, not invisible (B. Wilson 2019). On ANE and biblical cosmology see Houtman 1993; Wright 2000. On Lukan cosmology see Walton 2008; Anderson 2016.

³⁹⁶ Tob 3:6, 13:6 are nonextant in Aramaic.

³⁹⁷ See Balentine 1983, 80-114.

In Isa 45:14-15 captive Gentiles speak of Israel's God, declaring, 'There is no God except you; for you are God, and we have not known it (οὐκ ἤδειμεν), the God of Israel, saviour'. HB reads אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ אֵל מְסֻתָּתָר ('you are a God who hides himself', 45:15), with the *hithpael* vividly expressing divine self-hiddenness.³⁹⁸ The Vulgate's rendition *Deus absconditus* (passive) suggests an absent, 'hidden God', rather than a present, self-concealing God.³⁹⁹ Perlitt reads not adoration, but Israel's suffering.⁴⁰⁰ Dijkstra argues that Isa 45:15 HB is not a Gentile confession, but Israel's lament, rebutted in 45:17-19, since (as he suggests) 45:15 and 45:16 were interchanged.⁴⁰¹ Nonetheless, the OG takes 45:14-15 together as the nations' confession (cf. ἐροῦσιν, 45:14). The circumstances in 45:14 fit οὐκ ἤδειμεν and explain the γάρ-clause in 45:15. Whereas the Psalms often feature divine hiddenness as a lament due to divine disfavour and turning away (10:1, 11; 13:1; 27:9; 30:7; 44:24; 55:2; 69:17; 88:14; 89:46; 102:2; 143:7; cf. Lam 3:56),⁴⁰² Isa 45:14-15 expresses the Gentiles' experience of a God who kept himself hidden from them.⁴⁰³ In any case, as Simon comments, the fact that Yahweh reveals anything means he is always hidden to some extent, even to the faithful.⁴⁰⁴ Balentine argues that this motif in the Psalms is not always a result of the worshipper's sin, but of Israel's corporate disobedience, and thus consistent with instances in other texts.⁴⁰⁵ He agrees with Terrien that this motif is within the broader theme of God's elusive presence, but criticises him for generalising the cause of divine hiding in the Psalms as confessions of sin, since there is often "the positive tension between doubt and faith or between hiddenness and presence".⁴⁰⁶

The divine face-hiding motif is preserved in Qumran texts. God will hide his face due to Israel's disobedience in 4Q216 II 14 (ואסתיר[ר פני] מהם). A comparable avowal is made in 11Q19 LIX 7 (ואסתיר פני מהמה). 4Q387a 3 II 9 mentions God

³⁹⁸ According to Tg. Isa. 45:15, God's שְׁכִינָה dwells in the highest heaven (i.e., far removed; cf. 8:17; 59:2).

³⁹⁹ Also Terrien 2000, 251, 474.

⁴⁰⁰ Perlitt 1971, 381-82.

⁴⁰¹ Dijkstra 1977.

⁴⁰² Biblical authors may have adapted ANE divine-concealment or silence laments, such as in Sumerian and Akkadian psalms (Perlitt 1971, 367-82; Balentine 1983, 24-44, 158-63).

⁴⁰³ Baltzer 2001, 242.

⁴⁰⁴ Simon 1953, 129-35.

⁴⁰⁵ Balentine 1983, 50-56, 66-68.

⁴⁰⁶ Balentine 1983, 175; cf. Terrien (2000, 321-26 [notwithstanding Ps 22]).

administering punishment for malfeasance whilst hiding his face (ופני מסתרים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל; cf. 4Q385a 44:7-8; 4Q389 1 II 4-5 [הסתרתִי פני]). God hid his face according to CD-A I 3 (הסתיר פניו מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל) and II 8-9 ([יִשְׂרָאֵל] מִן הָאָרֶץ פָּנָיו אֶת פָּנָיו).⁴⁰⁷ Contrarily, the petitioner in 1QH^a VIII 26 implores God not to turn away his face (אל תשב פני עבדך), and the supplicant of 4Q437 2 I [+ 7 + 8 + 10] 7 says that God has not hidden his face (לֹא הִסְתִּירָהּ פָּנָיו מִן תַּחְנוּנִי).

God also conceals others. Baruch records Jeremiah's prophecies at God's behest and reads them aloud, disturbing officials (Jer 36:1-18). They tell Baruch to 'be hidden' (κατακρύβηθι) along with Jeremiah (36:19), and king Jehoiakim sends for their arrest, but 'they were hidden' (κατεκρύβησαν, 36:26). HB has 'But Yahweh hid them' (בַּיְסָתָרִים יְהוָה, 36:26). The concealments in 36:19 and 36:26 may be distinct—Baruch and Jeremiah hide themselves then God hides them. Alternatively, God orchestrates their self-concealment.

Jewish literature consistently portrays God as present, but not utterly revealed; concealed, but not utterly absent. One way God responds to turpitude is becoming increasingly imperceptible and inaccessible, hiding, turning away, or otherwise removing his presence. Just as the divine presence can be unfavourable (e.g., judgment in visitation), so divine absence can be detrimental. Whether to the Israelite or Gentile, the obedient or disobedient, Yahweh is elusively self-concealed.

3.1.6. Elusive Divine Wisdom

Yahweh's elusive presence entails searching for hidden Wisdom (σοφία/חֵכְמָה) (Pro 1:28; 2:3-5; 8:17; Eccl 7:23-29; 8:16-17; Job 28; Wis 6:12-14, 16, 17-20; 8:2, 18, 21; Sir 4:11-19 Hebrew; 6:22, 24-31; 14:20-27; 24; 51:20-21; 4 Ezra 5:9-10; 2 Bar. 48:36).⁴⁰⁸ Wisdom pronounces, 'For it will be at that time that you call upon me, but I shall not listen to you; the wicked will seek (ζητήσουσίν) me and they will not find (οὐχ εὕρησουσιν) me' (Pro 1:28; cf. 14:6). Wisdom, distancing herself from wickedness (1:29-31), is associated with (and attained by) 'the fear of the Lord/God'

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. 4Q167 2:6; 4Q176 8-11:9-10; 4Q177 II (7, 9-11, 20, 26) 8.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. Pro 7; 24:30-34; Eccl 3:11; Wis 13:6; see Crenshaw 1977; 2010, 52-58; Sinnott 2005, 173-74. On Israelite wisdom see Whybray 1974; Murphy 2002; von Rad 1993. I avoid the modern generic-categorical label 'wisdom literature' (see Kynes 2019).

(ὁ φόβος τοῦ κυρίου/θεοῦ, 1:7, 29)—namely obedience and hating evil⁴⁰⁹—and ought to be learned (1:2-9), practised (1:10-19), and heard and embraced (1:20-33) for proper conduct. The one diligently seeking Wisdom will find her (ζητέω or compound forms + εὕρισκω: 2:3-5; 8:17; Eccl 7:23-29; Wis 6:12-16).⁴¹⁰ Yet, seeking (ζητήσαι) Wisdom has limitations, for the wise person cannot find (εὕρεῖν) God’s works (Eccl 8:16-17). Unsurprisingly, Yahweh applies seeking-finding to himself (Deut 4:29; Jer 29:13-14; Isa 65:1; Amos 5:5-6; Hos 5:6, 15; cf. 1 Chron 28:29).

In Proverbs 8, Wisdom speaks as God’s attribute immanent to yet distinct from creation, brought forth and present before cosmic origins. Scholars interpret the original representation of Wisdom in 8:22-31 as an artisan advising God, a heavenly sage bringing knowledge, God’s cosmic child growing into a Lady/Woman, or remaining continually by God’s side. OG and other translations differently render the *crux interpretum* חָכְמָה (8:30), supporting various interpretations. Its vocalisation as חָכְמָה (MT) could mean ‘architect’/‘artisan’ (cf. Jer 52:15; Song 7:2), reflected in LXX where Wisdom is ‘harmonising’ (ἁρμόζουσα) by God’s side (also Peshitta; Vulgate).⁴¹¹ Some specialists posit an Akkadian loanword (*ummānu* = חָכְמָה) familiar in Mesopotamian mythology meaning a [semi-]divine ‘sage’/‘scribe’/‘bringer of culture’⁴¹² or ‘master’/‘scholar’ in terms of one bearing learned traditions or mediating knowledge.⁴¹³ The pointing חָכְמָה/חָכְמָה gives an adverbial sense of constancy, so Wisdom remains ‘faithfully’ by God’s side (cf. Deut 32:20; 2 Sam 20:19; Pss 12:2, 31:24; Pro 13:17; 14:5; 20:6; Isa 26:2; Sir 37:13 Hebrew), supported by Tg. Ket. Pro 8:30 and ἐστηρεγμένη (σ’; θ’).⁴¹⁴ Others read חָכְמָה (*qal* passive participle) meaning ‘foster-child’/‘nursling’ (cf. Lam 4:5; 2 Kgs 10:1, 5; also, Num 11:12; Ruth 4:16; 2 Sam 4:4; Isa 43:10; 49:23), understanding Wisdom characterised as God’s child,

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Pro 2:5-6; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:27; 15:33; 19:23; 22:4; 31:30; wisdom and knowledge associated with the fear of the Lord/God: Ps 111:10; Job 28:28; Isa 11:2; 33:6; Sirach (especially 1:1-30). On a potential derivative relationship see Schwáb 2013.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. Pro 24:14; Wis 8:2, 18.

⁴¹¹ Kidner 1964, 76. Some see חָכְמָה referencing Yahweh (Dahood 1968, 513, 519-20; Rogers 1997; and Wisdom: Longman 2006, 196, 207-209).

⁴¹² Clifford 1999, 25-28, 99-101; cf. Lucas 2015, 83-84.

⁴¹³ Lenzi 2006, 705-709.

⁴¹⁴ Weeks 2006; Schipper 2019, 312-15.

supported by τῆθνουμένη (α').⁴¹⁵ Still, others read an active participle referring to Wisdom as a 'living link' between God and creation⁴¹⁶ or an infinitive absolute functioning adverbially meaning 'growing up'.⁴¹⁷ Wisdom is not only brought forth by God (Pro 8:22-29), but 'rejoices'/'plays' (הִתְהַלְּלָהּ, Pro 8:30-31 [x2]) and is the object of his 'delight' (הֵנַחְתָּהּ, Pro 8:30; cf. Ps 119:24, 77, 92, 143, 174; Isa 5:7; Jer 31:20). Whereas LXX translates הִתְהַלְּלָהּ with εὐφραίνομένη ('rejoiced'), some witnesses (α' σ' θ') have παίζουσα ('playing'; cf. 2 Sam 6:21). Other portrayals of God as a child (HB: Gen 1:26-27; Ps 10:14; 1 Kgs 19:12) support the 'child' interpretation.⁴¹⁸ Proposed interpretations are not without difficulties, but all incorporate the recognisable emphasis on Wisdom's proximity to God.⁴¹⁹

Wisdom is almost utterly inaccessible for humankind according to Job 28. Separating three sections are two refrains asking where ἡ σοφία is found (εὐρέθη) and enquiring about the place of knowledge (τῆς ἐπιστήμης, 28:12) or understanding (τῆς συνέσεως, 28:20). The sections speak of human achievements unearthing precious stones and metals (28:1-11) in contrast to limitations locating, acquiring, and understanding Wisdom (28:13-19) whilst God knows Wisdom's location (28:21-27). The conclusion (28:28) answers the questions: '...godliness is Wisdom (σοφία), and to depart from evil is knowledge'.⁴²⁰ Wisdom is not entirely unattainable, but is found by proper ethical conduct.⁴²¹

For Sirach, Wisdom, identified with torah, delights to be with humans.⁴²² The fear of the Lord is manifested as Wisdom, emphasised with three sapiential pericopae at the beginning, middle, and end of Sirach (1:1-10; 24; 51:13-30), additional to

⁴¹⁵ McKane 1970, 357; Terrien 2000, 355-57, 384 n. 32; Plöger 1984, 95-96; Baumann 1996, 131-38; Hurowitz 1999; Waltke 2004–2005, 1:417-23; Brown 2009; 2012, 28-33; 2014, 52-54, 187.

⁴¹⁶ Scott 1960.

⁴¹⁷ Fox 1996; 2000, 286-87; cf. 1968, 68 n. 21.

⁴¹⁸ Parker 2019.

⁴¹⁹ Similarly, Sinnott 2005, 25-34.

⁴²⁰ חָיִל וְיָדָעַתָּה: HB. See Wilson 2015, 133-39.

⁴²¹ Job 28 may express cosmic inaccessible wisdom (Perdue 1993, 96; cf. Terrien 2000, 352-55). However, the conclusion is not that humans only have "...the practical wisdom of piety" (so Pope 1965, 206), but those who acknowledge limitations and surrender attempts of acquisition find Wisdom (van Wolde 2003).

⁴²² Murphy 1978, 38-39; cf. Reiterer 2008. The original Hebrew of the Jewish text Sirach/Wisdom of Ben Sira is dated ca. second century BCE (Coggins 1998, 18-20, 33-39).

hortatory sapiential sections (4:11-19; 6:18-37; 14:20-15:10).⁴²³ The Lord loves and embraces those who seek (τῶν ζητοῦντων) and love Wisdom (4:11-16; cf. 1:10). According to the Hebrew text, Wisdom theoxenically accompanies the one who trusts and embraces her: ‘For by disguising myself as a stranger, I shall walk with him’ (וְיִבְרַח אֵלַי כַּחַדְוֵי אֲנִי, 4:17a). She will test him until his heart is filled with her, then she will reveal her secrets/hiding places to him, but if he turns away from her, she will forsake him and deliver him to ruin (4:17-19). When one seeks (ζητήσον) Wisdom, she will make herself known (γνωσθήσεται), and one will find (εὑρήσει) her provided rest (6:27-28). Wisdom, who ministered in the tabernacle, searches for a dwelling and God gives it to her in Jerusalem among his people (24:7-12).⁴²⁴ She grows there like trees and plants (24:13-17). Wisdom labours for all ‘who seek’ (τοῖς ἐκζητοῦσιν) her (24:34; cf. 33:18).⁴²⁵ The contrast between dwelling among the obedient and scorning by the wicked is apparent throughout Sirach. Wisdom must be sought after (51:13), searched for (51:14), and acquired (51:25). Yet, she is easily found (εὑρον) by purity (51:20), and thus gained when sought (ἐκζητῆσαι, 51:21). She remains elusive for the ‘foolish’ (ἄσύνετοι) and ‘sinners’ (ἁμαρτωλοί) who will neither obtain nor see her (15:1-8).

Wisdom in Baruch⁴²⁶ (3:9-4:4) is likewise associated with the fear of the Lord, and her elusiveness results from [ancestral] disobedience (3:7, 20-23; cf. 3:12). She is elusive for the complacent person unconcerned about finding her (3:29-31). One can learn Wisdom’s location, and the understanding person has already found her (3:14, 31), since God gave her to Israel in the form of his law (3:25-27; 4:1; cf. 3:9). For Baruch, the epitome of knowledge and reason is communicated in the omniscient God’s law, so Wisdom is found in understanding and obeying torah.⁴²⁷ This Wisdom-torah association partly results from an intertextual dialogue between Deut 4 (contrasting wisdom of the nations and of Israel), Deut 30 (choosing life

⁴²³ Jacob 1978, 247-60. Sir 1:1-10 introduces the book in the first section (chs. 1-23), the second section follows (chs. 24-51), and ch. 51 concludes (Skehan and Di Lella 1987, 137).

⁴²⁴ Thus, among the temple cult, according with positive views of the priesthood (cf. Sir 44; 50) (Collins 1997, 51-52).

⁴²⁵ 24:34, absent in the Peshitta, may be a copyist addition (Skehan and Di Lella 1987, 329).

⁴²⁶ Although some scholars suggest that parts of Baruch date ca. fourth century BCE with additions as late as the first century CE, much of the book is confidently dated ca. mid-second century BCE, including my section of interest (see Moore 1974; Goldstein 1978–1979).

⁴²⁷ Grätz 2013.

through obedience), and Job 28:12-20 (search for Wisdom).⁴²⁸ The contrast between the presence and accessibility of Wisdom in Pro 1-9 and her elusiveness in Job 28 and Bar 3-4 is consonant with Yahweh’s accessible and hidden presence.⁴²⁹ According to the Similitudes of Enoch, Wisdom withdraws, unable to find a dwelling on earth among humankind, so Iniquity goes forth and dwells with those whom she did not seek but found (1 En. 42:1-3).⁴³⁰ Wisdom is always present with God according to the Book of Dreams (84:3), so distancing oneself from God by disobedience results in correlative distancing of Wisdom.⁴³¹

In Isaiah 29:14 God declares, ‘and I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent I shall hide’ (καὶ ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν κρύψω). 4 Ezra 5:9c-10a states, ‘then wisdom shall hide itself, and understanding shall withdraw into its treasury, and it shall be sought by many but shall not be found’ (trans. Stone and Henze).⁴³² The Latin says, ‘even then sense will be hidden (*abscondetur... sensus*), and intellect/understanding (*intellectus*) will be separated to its storeroom’.⁴³³ ‘Wisdom’ usually translates *sapientia* whereas 5:9 has *sensus* and *intellectus*.⁴³⁴ Nevertheless, these traits are frequently associated and the general notion is that they are withdrawn in judgment. 2 Bar. 48:36 also expresses this: ‘Many will say to many at that time: “Where has the abundance of intelligence hidden itself, and where has the abundance of wisdom retreated?”’ (trans.

⁴²⁸ Henderson 2016.

⁴²⁹ Sinnott 2005, 85-86, 88-109.

⁴³⁰ On comparing Wisdom in 1 Enoch and Sirach, including potential intertextuality, see Argall 1995; 2002; Wright 2007.

⁴³¹ Wisdom, not the Mosaic covenant and Torah, is 1 Enoch’s comprehensive category for revelation of the divine will and rewards or punishment for (dis)obedience (Nickelsburg 2007).

⁴³² 4 Ezra was probably composed ca. 70–120 CE (Metzger 1983, 520) in Hebrew, translated into Greek, then translated from Greek into Latin, the latter being the major basis for subsequent translations (Stone and Henze 2013, 2-7). I rely on Stone and Henze’s (2013) translation who seek to discern the Greek text. I also interact with the Latin. 2 Baruch is related intertextually or by a shared source and written contemporaneously (Klijn 1983, 616-20; Gurtner 2009, 15-18; Stone and Henze 2013, 1-2).

⁴³³ Cf. 4 Ezra 5:1: ‘and the portion of truth shall be hidden’ (trans. Stone and Henze) or ‘and the way of truth will be hidden’ (*et abscondetur veritatis via*).

⁴³⁴ Cf. Vulg.: Deut 4:6; Ps 110:10; Isa 11:2; Dan 1:20; Wis 7:22; Sir 1:4; 4:29 (*sapientia; sensus*); 4 Ezra 14:47 (*sapientia; intellectus*).

Stone and Henze; cf. 14:8-9; 44:14). Obeying torah is synonymous with not departing from Wisdom (38:4).⁴³⁵

1QS XI 5-8 claims that wisdom, knowledge, understanding, justice, strength, and glory have been hidden, only to be given to whom God selects.⁴³⁶ Aramaic Levi Document fragments preserve a command to seek (בִּעַא) self-hidden (מִטְמָרָה) Wisdom (4Q213 1 II [+ 2] 5-7) and encourage possessing Wisdom that cannot be stolen or have its secrets found by invaders (1Q21 F 22-23; 4Q213 1 II [+ 2] 1-4; 4Q214a 2-3 II).⁴³⁷ 4Q300 1 II 4-5 and 5:5 speak of a vision sealed to the foolish as hidden wisdom (חֲכָמָה נִכְחָדָה). According to 11Q5 XVIII 1-18, Wisdom was granted to reveal Yahweh's glory and power, but the wicked are distant from her word and knowledge.

Paradoxically, Wisdom is God's active and elusive presence in the world (cf. Wis 7:22; 10:1-21), but also an accessible gift.⁴³⁸ Wisdom is elusive to the foolish, the wicked, and the disobedient who neither embrace her nor live by her. Contrastively, Wisdom is sought and found in obedience to torah and attained in repudiating evil (in the fear of the Lord). Sinnott aptly summarises the biblical portrayal of Wisdom:

... a mysterious and elusive figure; close associate of YHWH; present at the creation; a figure who speaks, calling out in public places like a prophet; a teacher who invites all present to "listen/pay attention" to her message, and threatens doom for all who ignore her; a hostess who prepares a banquet and issues invitations; a figure identified with the Torah, and located in the Temple.⁴³⁹

3.1.7. Theophanic Traversal

Some non-theophanic traversals are conceptually related to theophanic traversals. Notably, God splits the sea as Moses extends his hand, aiding the Israelites who 'proceeded through dry in the midst of the sea' (ἐπορεύθησαν διὰ ξηρᾶς ἐν μέσῳ

⁴³⁵ Cf. 4 Ezra 13:54-55.

⁴³⁶ Cf. 1QH^a VI 3 encourages searching for בִּינָה / 'understanding'.

⁴³⁷ Cf. T. Levi 13:7-8. The second-century BCE Jewish Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs were composed in Greek then redacted, including by Christians into the second century CE (Kee 1983, 776-78; de Jonge 2003, 71-180; Kugler 2001, 31-38).

⁴³⁸ Murphy 1995; Sinnott 2005.

⁴³⁹ Sinnott 2005, 17. On the Wisdom-torah association see Schnabel 1985.

τῆς θαλάσσης, Exod 14:29; cf. 15:19; Ps 136:13-14), escaping the Egyptians. Jeremiah freely ‘passed through the midst of the city’ (διήλθεν διὰ μέσου τῆς πόλεως) before imprisonment (Jer 44:4). The righteous one ‘passes through’ (διελεύσεται) foreign nations assessing good and evil (Sir 39:4). ‘Passing through’ lands or peoples frequently conveys domination/decimation (διέρχομαι; mostly עָבַר, less so הָלַךְ, infrequently בָּוָה): Gen 41:46; Lev 26:6; 1 Sam 30:31; 2 Sam 7:7//1 Chron 17:6; 2 Chron 20:10; 1 Macc 1:3; 3:8; 5:51; 11:62; Joel 4:17 (but compare Isa 52:1); Nah 2:1 [1:15]; Hab 1:11 (possible); Ezek 5:17; 14:17.⁴⁴⁰ This idiom is used of the remnant of Jacob figuratively as a young lion passing through the midst of a flock (other nations) and devouring it (Mic 5:7; cf. Jdg 5:16). It occurs with a sword passing through the midst of Egypt in judgment (Sib. Or. 3:316). It also occurs for refraining from hostility (Isa 41:3).

Lohmeyer argues that παρέρχομαι (‘pass by’) often indicates theophanies or angelophanies, such as to Jacob (Gen 32:32), Moses (Exod 33:19, 22 [x2]; 34:6), and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:11), and even symbolically with Michael (Dan 12:1).⁴⁴¹ Including Gen 32:32 is problematic since αὐτός refers to Jacob as the subject of παρήλθεν with the object τὸ εἶδος τοῦ θεοῦ (cf. 32:31). Job 9:11 speaks of imperceptible theophanies: ‘If he (God) goes beyond me, I do not see; and if he passes by (παρέλθῃ) me, neither that do I know’.⁴⁴² Παρέρχομαι is used antithetically to remaining when Abraham prevails upon his visitors not to pass by (μὴ παρέλθῃς, Gen 18:3).⁴⁴³ They eventually ‘pass by’ (cf. παρελεύσεσθε, 18:5)⁴⁴⁴ to Sodom and the divine presence which was a blessing for those who welcomed it becomes a visitation of wrathful judgment for the wicked (Gen 19).⁴⁴⁵ Letellier comments that עָבַר in Gen 18:3

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Exod 15:16 (עָבַר/παρέρχομαι); Num 20:18-20; Jdg 11:20-22; Zech 10:11; 1 Macc 5:48. עָבַר + עָבַר often expresses traversing ‘through’, e.g., a city (Ezek 9:5), tribe (2 Sam 20:14), camp (Exod 23:27; 1 Kings 22:36), flock (Gen 30:32), or terrain (*DCH*, s.v. “עָבַר,” 234, 238; *BDB*, s.v. “עָבַר”). עָבַר is used not only of conquest (also initially peaceful passage: Num 20:17-21; 21:22-23; Deut 2:27; cf. 2 Chron 20:10), but of Yahweh’s forgiveness (Mic 7:18), Yahwistic theophany (Gen 18:1-16; Exod 34:6-7), and Yahwistic traversal in judgment or punitive destruction (Amos 5:17; Exod 12:12, 23) (*ThWQ*, s.v. “עָבַר,” 3:12, 14).

⁴⁴¹ Lohmeyer 1934, 216-19. See also Blackburn 1991, 148-50; Theissen 2007, 97. Cf. HB: עָבַר + עָבַר (Exod 33:19; 34:6); עָבַר + בָּ (33:22a); עָבַר (33:22b; 1 Kgs 19:11); יַעֲמֹד (Dan 12:1).

⁴⁴² עָבַר + עָבַר HB; an ‘anti-epiphany’ (so Yarbro Collins 1994, 227).

⁴⁴³ עָבַר + מְעַל HB.

⁴⁴⁴ עָבַר + עָל HB.

⁴⁴⁵ Letellier 1995, 86.

indicates a theophanic presence, citing some of these passages and adding 2 Kgs 4:8-17 (God's prophet), Ezek 16:1-14, and Hos 10:11-13.⁴⁴⁶ The OG uses other terminology, though the theophanic presence concept is retained. According to 2 Kgs 4:8-9, Elisha passed through (διαβαίνω + εἰς; אָל + עָבַר) Shunem where a woman offered hospitality, so whenever he entered or passed by (εἰσπορεύομαι; עָבַר) the city, as she tells her husband (διαπορεύομαι + ἐπί; עַל + עָבַר), he stayed at her place. In Ezek 16, God declares to Jerusalem that he initially 'passed through/by' (διέρχομαι + ἐπί; עַל + עָבַר) observing her dire circumstances and vivifying her (16:6), and later 'passed through/by' (διέρχομαι + διά; עַל + עָבַר) her again entering into a covenant (16:8); theophanic visitation and observation result in divine favour. God declares in Hos 10:11 that he 'spared' (ἐπέρχομαι + ἐπί; עַל + עָבַר) Ephraim's neck.

The term עָבַר can bear covenantal overtones, rendered with διέρχομαι. Thus, God ratifies a covenant with Abram when luminous manifestations 'passed upwards through the midst' (διήλθον ἀνὰ μέσον) of divided animal pieces (Gen 15:17).⁴⁴⁷ These terms also express judgment, highlighted especially with διέρχομαι in Amos 5:17 contrasting with παρέρχομαι in 7:8 and 8:2.⁴⁴⁸ God declares to Israel, 'I shall pass through the midst of you' (διελεύσομαι διὰ μέσου σου, 5:17) in judgment on the day of the Lord (cf. 5:18-20),⁴⁴⁹ but also, 'I shall no longer pass by him' (οὐκέτι μὴ προσθῶ τοῦ παρελθεῖν αὐτόν, 7:8; 8:2) withholding punishment.⁴⁵⁰ These declarations are couched in terms of Israel's sin and foregone punitive consequences. Wolff comments, "No punitive acts by Yahweh of any kind are specified, but neither is it merely Yahweh's absence that constitutes his punishment upon Israel. His active presence alone, his personal intervention, will effect Israel's death".⁴⁵¹ Yahweh's theophanic presence is either beneficial or unfavourable depending on one's response,

⁴⁴⁶ Letellier 1995, 85.

⁴⁴⁷ עָבַר בֵּין (HB; targumim [Frg. Tg.; Tg. Neof.; Tg. Ps.-J.] Gen 15:17).

⁴⁴⁸ For Crenshaw (1968), much of extant Amos is unoriginal, but 5:17, 7:8, and 8:2 are authentic theophanic traditions.

⁴⁴⁹ כִּי־אָעָבַר בְּקִרְבְּךָ HB. Textual variants include cognates of διελεύσομαι (LXX; W Q): ἐπελεύσομαι (A); εἰσελεύσομαι (26); ἐλεύσομαι (B V) (see GLXX 13:193).

⁴⁵⁰ לֹא־אֶזְכְּרֶיךָ עוֹד עָבוּר לִי HB. לְ + עָבַר indicates forgiving/sparing offenders (*DCH*, s.v. "עבר," 235, 238). Thus, 'passing by' Israel (7:8; 8:2) refers to God's temporary passivity of judgment (Mays 1969, 99, 133; Wolff 1977, 249, 294-95, 301; Paul 1991, 236, 254; Glenn 2013, 127, 135; Eidenvall 2017, 200, 213), less his withdrawn presence (*pace* Ortlund 2012, 327). Cf. Jdt 2:24 (παρήλθεν... διήλθεν [destruction]); 5:21 (παρελθέτω [sparing]).

⁴⁵¹ Wolff 1977, 249.

as Glenny observes, “Whereas the protective presence of the Lord was connected with life and blessing in 5:14, in 5:17 his presence brings death and lamentation. It is the same Lord in both verses; the difference is the response of the people to him and his call for righteousness”.⁴⁵²

This punitive theophanic traversal trope (Amos 5:17) is notably employed in Exod 12:12 where Yahweh⁴⁵³ executes judgment by ‘passing through’ (διέρχομαι + ἐν; עָבַר + בְּ) Egypt, striking down the firstborn.⁴⁵⁴ In 12:23 he will ‘pass by’ (παρέρχομαι; עָבַר) the Egyptians to smite them, but will ‘pass by/over’ (παρέρχομαι; עָלַ + פָּסַח) any house with blood on its lintel, not allowing ‘the destroyer’ to strike its inhabitants. Whether ‘the destroyer’ (τὸν ὀλοθρεύοντα; הַמְשִׁחֵת) is a primitive demonic power⁴⁵⁵ or angelic agent⁴⁵⁶ separate from Yahweh, a quasi-independent personalised Yahwistic aspect⁴⁵⁷ or angelic emissary,⁴⁵⁸ or an inherent aspect of divine judgment,⁴⁵⁹ Yahweh judges.⁴⁶⁰ Punitive theophany is described with both διέρχομαι and παρέρχομαι, but the latter is also used for divine forbearance. Angelic figures mediate the divine presence in Ezekiel’s vision of six anthropic, axe-wielding executioners (Ezek 9:1-11). A man in linen is commanded to ‘pass through the midst’ (διέλθε μέσην; עָבַר בְּתוֹךְ, 9:4) of Jerusalem, marking foreheads of people to be spared for remorse of iniquities, preceded by the others who smite everyone else (πορεύεσθε ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν πόλιν; עָבְרוּ בְעֵיר, 9:5). The ‘passing through’ idiom

⁴⁵² Glenny 2013, 102.

⁴⁵³ Targumim avoid Yahweh’s movement, so he appears/manifests (אֵלֵינוּ תְּגַלֵּי: Tg. Onq.; Tg. Ps.-J.) or the [א] מִימַר is subject or agent (Tg. Neof.; Tg. Neof. mg.; Frg. Tg. G) (Davies 2020, 2:67).

⁴⁵⁴ B Aeth(vid) read ἐλεύσομαι (Wevers 1992, 83; RLXX 105). Most commentators see Amos 5:17 recalling or reversing the Exod 12:12 tradition (e.g.: Mays 1969, 99; Andersen and Freedman 1989, 515-17; Paul 1991, 180-81), but my Amos passages were likely composed ca. mid-eighth century BCE (Cripps 1955, 34-41; Mays 1969, 1-14; cf. Eidenvall 2017, 15-26 [7:8, 8:2: exilic or post-exilic]) prior to Exodus 12:1-20 identified largely with priestly (P) authorship (ca. 587 BCE; see Childs 1974, 184-86; van Seters 2015, 139-64). Nevertheless, Amos applies exodus traditions (2:10-11; 3:1; 4:10 [possible]; 9:7) denying a once-for-all confirmation of Yahweh’s protection of his people (Hoffman 1989, 177-82; Paul 1991, 4). Hauan (1986) favours theophanic covenantal passages explaining Amos 5:17 (Gen 15:7-21, Exod 33:19; 34:5-6; Josh 3-4). However, these could post-date Amos and lack explicit punitive contexts.

⁴⁵⁵ Dozeman 2009, 274.

⁴⁵⁶ Davies 2020, 2:91-92.

⁴⁵⁷ Propp 1999, 408-409.

⁴⁵⁸ Durham 1987, 163.

⁴⁵⁹ Cole 1973, 117-18.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. angelic agents of judgment (Gen 19; 2 Sam 24:16//1 Chron 21:15; 2 Kgs 19:35; Ps 78:49 [Exod 12 reception]) (see Mach 1992, 62; Olyan 1993, 98-101).

for humans conquering or decimating territories or peoples illuminates its use for divine judgment, including with mediators.⁴⁶¹

Theophanic traversal is attested in Qumran texts. God's Spirit brings judgment in the fragmented 4Q248 5 which reads, '[and] Yahweh will [cause his] Spirit to pass through (ויהי עביר) their settlements/lands and...'⁴⁶² According to Damascus Document, God determined 'to destroy' (להעביר) transgressors (4Q270 2 II 18; 6Q15 5:4). Additionally, עבר is used for 'passing by' or castigatory forbearance, as in 4QInstruction^c (4Q417) 1 I 15 where God will turn away his anger and 'forgive' (ועבר על) sins.⁴⁶³ Theophanic judgment is also expressed in terms of divine 'visitation' in 4QInstruction where eschatological rewards or punishments are presently ordained based on conduct.⁴⁶⁴

In summary, *παρέρχομαι* (typically על/ל + עבר) is used for divine manifestation (Exod 33:19, 22; 34:6; 1 Kgs 19:11; Job 9:11), divine forbearance (Exod 12:23; Amos 7:8; 8:2), and, to a lesser extent, judgment (Exod 12:23).⁴⁶⁵ *Διέρχομαι* (typically ב + עבר) is used for judgment (Exod 12:12; Amos 5:17; Ezek 9:4) and divine manifestation (Gen 5:17; Ezek 16:6, 8 [על + עבר]). Like divine visitation, theophanic traversal is advantageous or adverse.

⁴⁶¹ As a metaphorical concept, the culturally coherent experiential basis of militants passing through territories/peoples in domination equips the reader with a concrete conceptual image of the [metonymical] 'source domain' (i.e., 'passing through') connoting the abstract, though unstated, 'target domain' (i.e., decimation or judgment) (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 8-9, 19-24, 56-68, 115-25).

⁴⁶² The fragment is part of a larger apocalyptic text (Brooke 2013, 194-96) or pseudo-prophetic text (Collins 2014, 106 n. 28, 126-27) mentioning a king, likely Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Schwartz 2001). Fabry (*ThWQ*, s.v. "עבר," 3:14), admitting uncertainty, includes it among examples of Israelites 'passing through/over' nations. Broshi and Eshel (1997, 123) suggest that ב + עבר (*hiphil*) refers to Yahweh causing his Spirit to pass through/by (cf. Ezek 14:15) causing delusion (e.g., 2 Kgs 19:7; Isa 19:14). Most plausibly, Yahweh's Spirit passes through in judgment creating undesirable circumstances.

⁴⁶³ Cf. lines 2 (עבור לו), 4 and 14 (תעבור על פשעיה). Also 4Q416 2 I 8 (possibly על [על]); 4Q270 2 II 18 (להעביר); 4Q438 4 II [+ 5] 3 (possibly [ו]תעביר); cf. Mic 7:18; *ThWQ*, s.v. "עבר," 3:17.

⁴⁶⁴ Goff 2003, 168-215; cf. García Martínez 2007, 171-86.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. scholars see *παρέρχομαι* in Mark 6:48 as revelation relating to the 'messianic secret' (Snoy 1974) or [the epiphany] Jesus intending to rescue (Heil 1981, 69-72; Fleddermann 1983, 392-95; Stegner 1994 [modelled on Exod 14]; Marcus 2000, 426) or lead (van Iersel 1992) his disciples; Theissen (2007, 94-97, 186) adds that John's account might imply ἀφανισμός once reaching land (6:21).

3.1.8. Supernatural Control

Supramundane figures exercise supernatural control, in some cases overlapping with other elusiveness conventions. God opens Hagar's eyes to perceive a well (ἀνέφξεν... τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, Gen 21:19). He opens a donkey's mouth to speak (ἤνοιξεν, Num 22:28) and uncovers Balaam's eyes to see the angel of the Lord (ἀπεκάλυψεν... τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, 22:31).⁴⁶⁶ Angels (possibly a multi-angelomorphic theophany) strike men at Sodom with blindness (ἐπάταξαν ἀορασία, Gen 19:11).⁴⁶⁷ HB uses עִוְוָה, figurative for visual imperception or cognitive distortion rather than literal blinding, occurring again only in 2 Kgs 6:18.⁴⁶⁸ Angelic invisibility, divine revelation, and divine protection in 2 Kgs 6:8-23 are joined by cognitive-perceptual control as God 'smote' (ἐπάταξεν) the Arameans 'with blindness' (ἀορασία, 6:18). They fail to recognise Elisha as God's prophet who leads them to Samaria (6:19). Upon arriving, God 'opened' (δήνοιξεν) their eyes and they saw that they were in Samaria (6:20). As with Elisha's servant whose eyes God 'opened' (δήνοιξεν) to see the invisible heavenly army (6:17), this is cognitive imperception rather than ocular inhibition.⁴⁶⁹ Elisha does not exercise control,⁴⁷⁰ but petitions God who acts. Josephus' retelling includes a mist motif (*Ant.* 9.56-57): '...Elisha also was beseeching God to dim/impair the sight (ὄψεις ἀμαυρῶσαι) of their opponents, casting upon them a mist (ἀγλόν) by which they might not discern (ἀγνοήσεν) him'. Elisha, 'going forth into the midst of his enemies' (προελθὼν εἰς μέσους τοὺς ἐχθρούς, 9.56), offers to take them to the prophet and they diligently follow, 'their sight and their mind having been obscured by God' (τὰς ὄψεις ὑπὸ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἐπεσκοτημένοι, 9.57). Upon arriving, Elisha 'prayed to God to clear the sight (καθαῖραι τὰς ὄψεις) of their opponents and to remove the mist from them (τὴν ἀγλὸν αὐτῶν ἀνελεῖν), but being freed from that dimness/impairment (ἐκ τῆς ἀμαυρώσεως ἐκείνης ἀφεθέντες) they saw themselves present in the midst of their

⁴⁶⁶ HB attributes these to Yahweh. Cf. LAB 18:9.

⁴⁶⁷ See Hartsock 2008, 83-124 (divinely induced blindness and physiognomic implications).

⁴⁶⁸ Some scholars posit Akkadian loanwords: *šunwurum* for blinding by flashing light (Speiser 1964, 139-40; Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 74; Letellier 1995, 152-54) and *sinnurbū* for an eye defect (Hamilton 1990/1995, 30 n. 13, 37-38 [citing von Soden 1986, 341-44]). Although the etymology is unclear, perceptual (not merely visual) distortion is probably intended (von Rad 1972, 219; Westermann 1985, 302).

⁴⁶⁹ LaBarbera 1984, 642-43; Sweeney 2007, 309.

⁴⁷⁰ Pace Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 74-75.

enemies'. Cognitive inhibition similarly transpires in LAB 27:10 where the Lord sends Ingethel/Gethel, the angel over hidden things who works invisibly, to aid Kenaz in battle by smiting the Amorites with blindness. The Amorites can see, but regard each other as enemies.

God implants misleading spirits or thoughts (Jdg 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14-16, 23; 19:9/18:10 HB; 19:18-24 [cf. 23:14, 24-29; 27:1; Ps 31; LAB 60]; 1 Kgs 22:23//2 Chron 18:22; Isa 37:7; 1QapGen 20:16-17).⁴⁷¹ He sends cowardice (ἐπάξω δειλίαν) into hearts (Lev 26:36). He smites people in 'madness' (παραπληξία), 'blindness' (ἀορασία), and 'bewilderment of mind' (ἐκστάσει διανοίας) for disobedience (Deut 28:28). HB uses נִרְיָא here for 'blindness',⁴⁷² occurring again only in Zech 12:4 (cf. 14:13) where God will strike horses with 'bewilderment' (ἐκστάσει) and 'blindness' (ἀποτοφλώσει), and their riders with 'madness' (παραφρονήσει). God hardens the hearts of Pharaoh to detain the Israelites (Exod 4:21; 7:3, 22; 8:15; 9:12, 35; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8; cf. 13:15) and of the Egyptians to pursue them into the sea (14:17; cf. LAB 10:6: *Deus obduravit sensum eorum*). Wis 19:13-16 speaks of God's punishment of the Egyptians for inhospitality to strangers (the Israelites), worse than at Sodom, so 'they were smitten with blindness (ἐπλήγησαν... ἀορασία) just as those at the door of the righteous one' (19:17; cf. Gen 19:11).⁴⁷³ God also causes confusion (Exod 14:24; 23:27; Deut 2:15; Jos 10:10; Jdg 4:15; 1 Sam 7:10; 2 Sam 22:15//Ps 18:15//144:6; 2 Chron 15:6; Ps 20:10; Isa 10:33) and alters demeanour, as when Esther approaches the infuriated king 'and God changed (μετέβαλεν) the spirit of the king to meekness' (Add Esth [D 8] 5:1).

The story of God confusing speech at Babel (Gen 11:1-9) is taken up in LAB 7:5 where he also makes everyone unrecognisable.⁴⁷⁴ According to 3 Bar. 3:8, God smites people at Babel 'with blindness and with confused speech' (ἀορασία καὶ ἐν γλωσσαλλαγή).⁴⁷⁵ God thwarts Ptolemy's successive plans to destroy the Jews in 3 Maccabees by causing him to sleep (5:1-19), seizing him with ignorance (ἀγνωσία

⁴⁷¹ Cf. Rev 17:17.

⁴⁷² Cognates נִרְיָא (adjective) and נִרְיָא (verb) are most frequent.

⁴⁷³ Cf. an angel descends in Moses' guise then God makes Egyptians either mute, deaf, or blind, unable to communicate about the real Moses (Mek. R. Ish. 18.4).

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Zeruel changes David's appearance after slaying Goliath, making him unrecognisable (LAB 61:9); Saul's appearance is changed to visit the witch in Endor (64:4).

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. 3:6; 'chastened them invisibly' (3:8 [Slavonic trans. Kulik]).

κεκρατημένος, 5:27), implanting forgetfulness (5:28), and causing confusion (5:29-30). With Ptolemy's third attempt (5:37-6:17), angels make the hostiles scared and confused (6:18-20). In Joseph and Aseneth, God hears Aseneth's prayer for protection from assassins, '...and immediately the swords poured from their hands and fell to the earth and broke up like ashes' (27:8), a phenomenon ascribed to divine miracle (28:1-7). Qumran texts attest to God striking miscreants with blindness and confusion (4Q167 I 7-10 [Hos 2:8]; 4Q387a 3 II 4-5).⁴⁷⁶

According to Artapanus (*fr.* 3 in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.27.23), Moses miraculously escapes incarceration in Egypt as prison doors 'were opened automatically' (αὐτομάτως ἀνοιχθῆναι), and some jailers died whilst others 'were weakened by sleep' (ὕπνῳ τοῦ ὕπνου παρεθῆναι), and weapons 'were broken in pieces' (κατεαγῆναι).⁴⁷⁷ For Koskenniemi, among early Jewish accounts of OT wonder-workers ranging in depictions of divine and human roles, Artapanus' Moses exercises more independent active agency (bearing numinous power), probably subverting wonder-workers familiar to a Gentile audience.⁴⁷⁸ Nevertheless, grammatical passives suggest God's activity, and Clement more explicitly says that the doors open 'by the will of God' (*Strom.* 1.23).

Satan and demonic figures also exercise supernatural control. Simeon ill-treated Joseph because 'the ruler of deception' (ὁ ἄρχων τῆς πλάνης) sent a 'spirit of jealousy' that, Simeon says, 'blinded my mind' (ἐτύφλωσέ μου τὸν νοῦν, T. Sim. 2:7). Judah confesses that his love for money led to sin, but in ignorance because ὁ ἄρχων τῆς πλάνης 'blinded' (ἐτύφλωσε) him (T. Jud. 19:4). In T. Job 26:6, Satan stands behind Job's wife and troubles her thoughts. Throughout Testament of Solomon, Solomon interrogates demons/spirits claiming to control cognition, emotions, situations, and circumstances ([A] 4:5-6; 5:7-8; 6:4; 7:5; 8:5-10; 10:3; 11:2; 13:3-4; 16:1-4; 18:4-42; 25:3-6).⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ עורר occurs elsewhere: 1QS IV 11; CD-A XVI 2; 4Q504 1-2 II 14; 4Q513 3-4:4.

⁴⁷⁷ Artapanus, an Egyptian Jew, composed Concerning the Jews ca. 250–100 BCE (Collins 1985, 890-91; 2010; Barclay 1996, 127-32; cf. questioning Jewish authorship: Jacobson 2006; Zellentin 2008), a text reflecting ancient Mediterranean influences (Weaver 2004, 64-78, 201-204).

⁴⁷⁸ Koskenniemi 2005, 89-107, 297-98; cf. Fletcher-Louis 1997, 177-84.

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. b. Mak. 6b; on angels blinding enemies in later literature see Ginzberg 1909–1938, 3:342, 4:42, 6:183-84. The final form of Testament of Solomon probably contains older Jewish traditions, but reflects Christian redaction and composition dated ca. second or third century CE (debated by Duling 1988, 88-91; Klutz 2005; Schwarz 2007).

Evidence for Jewish magic in Second Temple source-material is paucal outside the NT, but plentiful in late-antique (third–seventh centuries CE) and later materials.⁴⁸⁰ Second Temple practices are mostly medicinal, apotropaic (including exorcistic), or divinatory, with erotic and aggressive practices involving love-potions (e.g., philtres) or curses.⁴⁸¹ A few late-antique materials evince uses for escape and invisibility⁴⁸² or, more prominently, social control.⁴⁸³ Despite examples of supernatural control delineated above, instances of manipulating vision or cognition are curiously absent in Jewish magical data (notwithstanding erotic or social control).

To summarise, perceptual revelation, often attributed to God, is expressed with an eye-opening idiom. Supernatural ‘blinding’ is the antithesis, whether literal visual impairment or idiomatic for cognitive inhibition, and is frequently punitive, like emotional/attitudinal control. Divine figures control physical elements, aiding mortals and facilitating escape, and even Satan or demonic beings influence sin or cause infirmities. Like Graeco-Roman literature, Jewish writings depict a world and its manipulable inhabitants under governing supramundane figures’ ascendancy and control.⁴⁸⁴

3.2. Synthesis and Observations

With ancient Mediterranean literary elusiveness conventions established (Chapters 2-3), the following chapters will examine how the ancient reader of Luke-Acts draws from this repertoire whilst characterising Jesus in my focal episodes. As with Graeco-Roman traditions, Jewish traditions normally depict supramundane figures as reflexively/actively elusive and mortals as having more passive roles or reliant on numinous power. Amazed characters occasionally infer divine identity from elusiveness phenomena. Yahweh and angelic figures are characterised as elusive throughout the OT corpus and cognate literature, with some narratives containing multiple conventions, such as disguised visitation, reflexive disappearance, and supernatural control in Gen 18-19 or invisibility and supernatural control in the

⁴⁸⁰ Bohak 2008.

⁴⁸¹ Bohak 2008, 70-142.

⁴⁸² Bohak 2008, 261.

⁴⁸³ Bohak 2008, 155-56, cf. 58, 428.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Rom 8:38; Eph 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:15; 1 Pet 3:22.

Elisha-Arameans story (2 Kgs 6:8-23). Traditions of God's self-concealment, Wisdom, and theophanic traversal further contribute to the reputation of the divine elusive presence. God also remains elusive through intermediaries. Angelic and even demonic elusiveness are ultimately theomorphic, derivative of this divine characteristic.

CHAPTER 4
ELUSIVENESS OF THE CHILD JESUS (LUKE 2:41-52)

**4.1. Evaluating Scholarly Interpretations and Establishing Interpretive
Limitations**

Having established an extratextual repertoire of ancient Mediterranean literary conventions of elusiveness (Chapters 2-3), I am now in a position to assess how Luke's reader builds Jesus' character as an elusive figure and recognises an elusiveness theme by formulating text-guided and extratextual-informed readings in my focal episodes. Before examining how the reader's invocation of extratextual traditions of independent youths (particularly the *Telemacheia*) and Wisdom illuminates Lukan compositional and christological features of the child Jesus pericope (Luke 2:41-52), I evaluate scholarly construals whilst establishing how the text limits interpretive options for critics and the reader. My analysis corrects previous scholarship overemphasising Jesus' childhood precocity and ordained destiny which overlook other prominent features, such as his intentional evasiveness as an independent youth on a journey. It also moves beyond scholarly focus on Jesus' possession of wisdom to expand understandings of Jesus represented as Wisdom. We shall see how the reader begins formulating a portrait of an exceptionally theomorphic elusive Jesus already beginning Luke's Gospel as part of an elusiveness theme. I begin with some preliminary observations about how Luke's childhood episode, along with the preceding infancy narrative, sets expectations for the reader about Jesus' character (Christology) and Lukan thematic interests.

**4.1.1. Setting the Stage: Beginning Characterisation in the Infancy and
Childhood Narratives**

Luke's Gospel preface, without mentioning Jesus, sets an expectation of narrated events (Luke 1:1-4), but his Acts preface specifies that the Gospel relays Jesus' deeds and teachings (Acts 1:1-2). Luke imparts significant matters about Jesus from pre-parturition to ascension, including intermediate stages of birth, childhood, adulthood, death, and resurrection. Preceding the childhood story, Luke creates opportunities for the reader to ascertain Jesus' superior theomorphic identity by both extratextual and intratextual comparisons. Applying familiar OT birth conventions

(cf. Gen 16:7-13; 17:1-21; 18:1-15; Jdg 13:3-20; 1 Sam 1-3), Luke fashions a *synkrisis* or ‘step-parallelism’ in Luke 1-3 between the birth accounts of John (1:5-25, 57-80) and Jesus (1:26-38; 2:1-40), casting Jesus as superior.⁴⁸⁵ An effect is that the question “Who, therefore, will this child be?” asked of John (1:66) is also asked of Jesus by the reader⁴⁸⁶ who emulates this performative enquiry focalised through tertiary characters.⁴⁸⁷ Even Zechariah’s Spirit-filled proclamation is more about Jesus than John (1:67-79),⁴⁸⁸ though John will act elusively with his prolonged wilderness isolation (1:80). Zechariah says that God ‘visited (ἐπεσκέψατο) and redeemed his people’ (1:68). Whereas John is ‘a prophet of the Most High’ (1:76) who proceeds before the Lord⁴⁸⁹ revealing divine salvation and mercy ‘in which a dawn from on high will visit’ (1:78), Jesus is ‘a Son of the Most High’ (1:32)⁴⁹⁰ through whom God visits.⁴⁹¹ Jesus’ impending redemptive accomplishments entail God’s visitation through his Son and Messiah.⁴⁹²

Luke’s characters and reader anticipate Jesus’ traits and actions to correspond with information revealed in the infancy and childhood narratives.⁴⁹³ The childhood account serves as a concrete illustration between summary statements about Jesus’

⁴⁸⁵ Brown 1977, 156-59, 233-499; Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:15-25, 42-43; Nolland 1989–1993, 1:34-42; Ó Fearghail 1991, 11-18; Kuhn 2001; cf. already, Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 18.1-2. Others see less parallelism: Farris 1985, 99-107; Wolter 2016, 1:56-57, 73 (denying a ‘diptych’, contra Dibelius 1911, 67ff.). Nevertheless, (re-)reading and contemplating involve comparison. Parallelism directs the reader to continue comparing John and Jesus whilst character-building (Darr 1992, 58-73).

⁴⁸⁶ Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:375.

⁴⁸⁷ Darr 1992, 62, 184 n. 3 (referencing Rabinowitz 1987, 55 [characters performing actions expected of the reader underscores importance]).

⁴⁸⁸ The parts (1:68-75 about God; 1:76-79 about John) ultimately pertain to achievements through Jesus (Morris 2008, 96-98; Strauss 1995, 97-108).

⁴⁸⁹ Despite κύριος referring to Jesus (1:43), John proceeds before κύριον τὸν θεόν (1:16-17), so κυρίου (in a γάρ-clause) in 1:76 is synonymous with ὑψίστου/God (C.F. Evans 1990, 186). Yet, Luke ambiguously employs κύριος, so interpreting κυρίου as Jesus is not unwarranted (Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:385-86).

⁴⁹⁰ Brooke (2020, 206-209) detects Luke’s positive messianic application of a ‘Son of God’ tradition shared with 4Q246, either by misunderstanding or intentionally subverting its application to a negative figure or matching a positive messianic figure.

⁴⁹¹ NA²⁸ (183) opts for ἐπισκέπεται (future) in 1:78 (κ* B L W Θ 0177 sy^{s.p.hmg} co), but ἐπεσκέψατο (aorist) is well attested (κ² A C D ℞ latt sy^h Ir^{lat}), the *lectio difficilior*, corresponds with 1:68, and fits other proleptic aorists (1:51-53) (see Brown 1977, 373; Farris 1985, 128).

⁴⁹² Cf. Luke 7:16; Acts 15:14; Coleridge 1993; Strauss 1995, 103, 113-14; Rowe 2006, 77, 157-58, 165-66, 201.

⁴⁹³ Whatever their source-history and form-history (see Brown 1977, 239-55; Farris 1985, 14-98; Horsley 1989, 107-123; Jung 2004), Luke homogeneously integrates traditions with his theology (Oliver 1964; Minear 1966; Tatum 1967).

maturity (2:40, 52; an *inclusio*),⁴⁹⁴ as an analeptic finale to the infancy narrative providing the first glimpse of Jesus acting as God's Son (cf. 1:32-35).⁴⁹⁵ The reader understands this infancy and childhood material as proleptic, aware that similar narratives in Graeco-Roman biographical literature commence characterisation and foreshadow accomplishments.⁴⁹⁶ Tannehill notes that Jesus' occupation with his Father's affairs (2:49) foreshadows his ministry as the first instance discerning his divine sonship and ordained destiny.⁴⁹⁷ Additional to divine sonship signifying a functional consequence of anticipated royal-Davidic messiahship (cf. 2 Sam 7:11-16; Pss 2:7; 89:29),⁴⁹⁸ a special relationship to God (cf. Exod 4:22; Jer 31:9), or God's chosen human agent instilled with divine δύναμις (as in Mark),⁴⁹⁹ in Luke it signifies Jesus' divinity from conception by maternal virginity and divine activity (Spirit and δύναμις; Luke 1:26-38; cf. 2:21); thus, the supramundane Jesus is Joseph's son ὡς ἐνομιζέτο (3:23; cf. 2:49; 4:22).⁵⁰⁰ This indicates Jesus' theomorphic identity beyond Kirk's stress on new creation (not incarnation) by the Spirit with Adamic categories explicating and enriching Jesus' inaugurated Davidic rule.⁵⁰¹ The Lukan divine-conception myth resembles traditions of demigods,⁵⁰² but depicts non-sexual deification (ἐπελεύσεται ἐπί... ἐπισκιάσει, 1:35).⁵⁰³ Characters in the opening narratives are aware of Jesus' divine sonship or royal-Davidic messiahship, lordship,

⁴⁹⁴ Green 1997, 120, 153-54, 203 n. 2.

⁴⁹⁵ Schürmann 1969, 1:132-33.

⁴⁹⁶ Graeco-Roman literature: Nilsson 1968, 533-83; Pelling 1990 (characterisation); cf. Burridge 2004, 130-33, 159-63, 189-93; Luke: Talbert 1980; 2002, 15-17; Ó Fearghail 1991, 117-55, 161-73; Shuler 1998, 186-87; McGaughey (1999, 27-28) parallels Theagenes' divine birth and childhood strength foreshadowing athleticism and post-mortem divine honours (Paus. 6.11.1-9; cf. 6.6.5); cf. Frein 1994; paralleling deified Augustus: Norden 1924, 154-62; Erdmann 1932, 7-16; Billings 2009. Ancient biographies establish or explain a person's fame to earn respect, like Luke's childhood account justifying honouring Jesus (de Jonge 1978, 342, 348-49).

⁴⁹⁷ Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:53-56. Talbert (1982) sees a first exemplification of spiritual development and obedience (then anointing, passion, resurrection, and ascension).

⁴⁹⁸ Miura 2007, 200-242; García Martínez 2007, 261-83 (Qumran texts); for Luke 1:32-35, Green (1997, 88 n. 30) references: Jer 23:5-8; Ezek 37:21-23; Zech 3:8-10; 12:17-13:1; Hag 2:21-22; 4 Ezra 12:21-32; Pss. Sol. 17-18; 1QM 11:1-18; 4QFlor 10-13; 4QTest 9-13.

⁴⁹⁹ Mills 1990, 13-14, 98.

⁵⁰⁰ Similarly, Green 1997, 88-91; Strauss 1995, 76-129 (subordinate to God).

⁵⁰¹ Kirk 2016, 218-22, 392.

⁵⁰² See Danker 1988, 39; C.F. Evans 1990, 154-58. Cf. Plutarch, *Num.* 4.

⁵⁰³ Litwa 2014, 37-67; 2019, 86-95. Cf. the theomorphic Jesus (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων... ἴσα θεῷ) assumes anthropic form (divine visitation) for crucifixion according to Phil 2:6-11.

and ordained roles, but some (particularly Mary) ponder utterances and exhibit unresolved incomprehension (1:65-66; 2:19, 51).⁵⁰⁴ Since Jesus' identity is imperspicuous to *dramatis personae* and the reader, Christology must be developed and further revealed as the narrative progresses.⁵⁰⁵

Whereas other NT Gospels omit childhood accounts, the Lukan Jesus' separation from his parents who seek him offers precedent for adulthood withdrawals (4:1-13, 30, 42; 5:16; 6:10-12; 9:10; 22:39, 41; cf. 9:18, 28). Additionally, just as his cryptic reply is incomprehensible and his behaviour is contemplated (2:49-50, 51b), so his later disclosures and actions induce cognitive errancies (4:22; 8:9-10; 9:43-45; 10:21-24; 18:31-34; 19:41-44; 24:13-35; cf. 5:21; 7:49; 8:25; 9:9, 33, 46-62; 10:38-42; 11:27-28; 12:13; 18:15; 19:11, 48; 22:24, 38-51). He will supply avoidant or enigmatic answers again when questioned (20:1-8; 22:67-23:3). Finally, the childhood story is the first major instance of the recurrent journey motif⁵⁰⁶ as Jesus travels to Jerusalem with his parents, eludes them to extend his journey according to God's plan, then returns home, modelling a Jesus on the move.

4.1.2. Scholarly Emphasis on Jesus as Child Prodigy Overlooks Lukan Emphasis on Jesus as Independent Youth

Scholars rightly detect Jesus' exceptional childhood precocity.⁵⁰⁷ Statements about Jesus' maturity, wisdom, and favoured development enclosing the pericope underscore precocity.⁵⁰⁸ 'Now the child was growing and becoming strong, being filled with wisdom (ἠϋξανεὺν καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο πληροῦμενον σοφία), and the grace of God was upon him' (2:40);⁵⁰⁹ 'And Jesus was advancing in wisdom, and in maturity (προέκοπτεν [ἐν τῇ] σοφία καὶ ἡλικία), and in grace before God and people' (2:52).⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁴ Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:334-41, 397-98.

⁵⁰⁵ For Friedeman (2018), the incomprehensible mystery of Luke's divine Christology (Messiah, Son of God, and Lord) veiled in Luke 1-2 is progressively revealed throughout Luke-Acts.

⁵⁰⁶ See §1.1.1.iii.

⁵⁰⁷ Some early Gospels even portray a child wonder-worker (IGT; Life of John the Baptist 7:3-8, 21) or polymorphous Jesus appearing in child form (Gos. Jud. 33:20; Gos. Sav. 107:57-60; Ap. John 2; Apoc. Paul 18; Acts John 88; Hippolytus, *Haer.* 6.42.2; Gos. Thom. 4; see Kasser et al 2008, 30 n. 8) representing Luke's child Jesus and divine hiddenness or unexpected presence (Pagels and King 2007, 126-27).

⁵⁰⁸ Fiorenza 1982, 400.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Acts 7:22.

⁵¹⁰ These also stress Jesus' real humanity (Rowe 2006, 77).

Jesus sits (καθεζόμενον) in the temple among the teachers (τῶν διδασκάλων), listening and posing questions (2:46),⁵¹¹ as witnesses are amazed (ἐξίσταντο) at his understanding (συνέσει) and answers (2:47), including his astonished parents (ἐξεπλάγησαν) (2:48). Nevertheless, scholars preoccupied with this depiction overlook emphasis on the youthful Jesus' independence, sonship, and maturation. As we shall see, these features contribute to his elusiveness, particularly illuminated by a reading alongside the *Telemacheia*.

Bultmann perceives two important motifs in Luke's childhood pericope: child prodigy and revealed destiny.⁵¹² For child prodigy parallels he suggests Joseph (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.320), Josephus (*Life* 8-9), Moses (Philo, *Mos.* 1.21), Cyrus (Hdt. 1.113-15), Alexander (Plutarch, *Alex.* 5), and Apollonius (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7).⁵¹³ For Jesus' revealed destiny he parallels Eliezer ben Hyrcanus travelling to Jerusalem to study torah whose father later goes to disinherit him (Pirqe R. El. 1.1; 2.1; 2.4).⁵¹⁴ However, Eliezer does not run away and is not 'found' as Bultmann suggests, but his father tells him to go and arrives later. The most similar aspect of the Joseph parallel is surpassing intelligence (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.320). Closer is Josephus who 'advanced' (προύκοπτον) in his training, excelled in 'understanding' (συνέσει), and gave insight to high priests and city principals who asked him about the law (*Life* 8-9). Philo speaks of 'teachers' (διδάσκαλοι) whose abilities the child Moses surpassed (τὰς δυνάμεις ὑπερέβαλεν, *Mos.* 1.21). When ten-year-old Cyrus is questioned about punishing a playmate, king Astyages is impressed by his answer and questions his origins (Hdt. 1.113-15). During his father's absence, Alexander converses with a Persian envoy and 'asked neither childish nor small questions' (τῷ μηδὲν ἐρώτημα παιδικὸν ἐρωτῆσαι μηδὲ μικρόν), causing them 'to marvel' (θαυμάζειν, Plutarch, *Alex.* 5.1; cf. 4.4; 6.1-5). Apollonius displays exceptional intellectual development

⁵¹¹ The reader might think of Mal 3:1-4 where the Lord who is sought (ζητεῖτε) comes to his temple and sits (καθεῖται) to cleanse the Levites (see Laurentin 1966, 89-92, 138; cf. Matt 26:55).

⁵¹² Bultmann 1963, 300. Similarly, de Jonge 1978 (surprising intelligence and prioritising God as Jesus' Father); Bovon 2002–2013, 1:108.

⁵¹³ Bultmann 1963, 300. Several commentators uncritically repeat these (e.g., Grundmann 1966, 94; Brown 1977, 482; Marshall 1978, 125; Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:437; C.F. Evans 1990, 222-23; Johnson 1991, 60; Levine and Witherington 2018, 70). Litwa (2019, 122-26) elaborates instances. Cf. Gal 1:14.

⁵¹⁴ Bultmann 1963, 301 (citing Bin Gorion 1916–1923, 2:18-24); cf. b. Sukkah 28a.

throughout his education, though his superior intelligence is implicitly compared to that of peers, not elders (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 1.7).

De Jonge includes, among other examples: Cyrus' surpassing greatness among peers during education until twelve or older and wisdom conversing with his grandfather and mother (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.3.1-18; 1.4.1ff.); Epicurus beginning philosophy at twelve (Diog. Laert. 10.2; 10.14); the ten-year-old Cambyses pronouncing his future campaign against Egypt, astonishing (θαῦμα) his mother and women (Hdt. 3.3); Abraham forsaking idols at fourteen (Jub. 11:16); Samuel prophesying at twelve (Josephus, *Ant.* 5.348); and youthful Solomon assuming the throne (1 Kgs 2:12).⁵¹⁵ Radl suggests: Samuel's calling (LAB 53:1-7); Demosthenes' nobility shown by his father's death (Lucian, *Encom. Demosth.* 11); Augustus' impressive oration at twelve and later recognitions, excelling in development (Nic. Dam., *Vit. Caes.* 3 [FGH 127]; Suetonius, *Aug.* 8.1); Romulus and Remus' hunting and ambuscading (Livy 1.4.8-9); and numerous figures in Plutarch (*Alex.* 4; *Cic.* 2.2; *Dion* 4.2; *Rom.* 6; *Sol.* 2.1; *Them.* 2.1; *Thes.* 6.4).⁵¹⁶ Youthfulness of Abraham, Samuel, and Solomon beginning their callings is the chief similarity of these parallels with Luke's story, but other analogues contain extraordinary youthful intelligence.

Fitzmyer criticises Bultmann for over-emphasising the precocious child motif, though not doubting Luke's familiarity with similar stories.⁵¹⁷ Luke applies this familiar motif without imitating a particular account. Rather than in a context of education or among peers, Jesus' brilliance is displayed amid διδάσκαλοι—superiors and legal experts. Proposed analogues lack prominent details such as the youth's unknown whereabouts or being sought.

A neglected tradition offering several intriguing parallels, additional to maturation and destiny, is the *Telemacheia*. Although MacDonald offers places where he believes Mark, Luke, and Acts imitate Telemachus in the *Odyssey*,⁵¹⁸ he does not

⁵¹⁵ De Jonge 1978, 322-23, 340-41.

⁵¹⁶ Radl 2003, 136.

⁵¹⁷ Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:436-37. Others emphasise Jesus' dissolution from his parents and unification with his Father (van Iersel 1960, 168-73; Marshall 1978, 125-28).

⁵¹⁸ MacDonald 2015a, 134-43, 163-64: empowerment (*Od.* 1.11-324/Mark 1:9-11); boldness/authority (*Od.* 1.335-420/Mark 1:14-15, 21-27); Penelope/Dorcas (*Od.* 2.1-128/Acts 9:36-42); compatriots' rejection (*Od.* 2.143-259/Luke 4:14-36); and opponents plotting death (*Od.* 4.557-847/Mark 3:6).

offer a Lukan childhood story parallel.⁵¹⁹ He parallels the *Telemacheia* with Tobit where a disguised heavenly guide (Raphael) accompanies an only son (Tobias) on a journey, especially given a shared myth or intertextual relationship.⁵²⁰ Although these share features absent in Luke’s pericope, the *Telemacheia* and Lukan story share correspondences absent in Tobit. For instance, Tobias’ coming of age journey⁵²¹ is not without parental knowledge, he does not correct his mother, and he does not display authority amid elders. Reading Luke’s story alongside this Homeric tradition will highlight not only the youthful Jesus’ precocity and destiny, but also acts of independence commencing his elusive conduct (§4.2.1).

4.1.3. Scholarly Focus on Jesus Possessing Wisdom Overshadows Lukan Representation of Jesus as Wisdom

Scholars accurately discern a foregrounding of wisdom in Luke’s childhood story as Jesus is filled with and grows in wisdom, conveyed by σοφία (Luke 2:40, 52) and displayed among teachers in the temple (2:46-47).⁵²² Similar comments describe Samuel growing favourably in the presence of God and people, ministering before the Lord (1 Sam 2:21, 26; 3:1, 19-21).⁵²³ The child embracing Wisdom finds good prudence and favour before God and people (Pro 3:1-4 HB).⁵²⁴ Stählin adds youthful Ben Sira’s search for Wisdom (Sir 51:13-17), noting later Jesus-Wisdom associations (Luke 7:35; 11:31, 49).⁵²⁵ Strauss correctly observes the absence of ‘wisdom’ in the Samuel passages, but on this basis dismisses Pro 3:1-4 (opening lines of a proverb about Wisdom) and is critical of the Sirach parallel since the youth does not already possess wisdom.⁵²⁶ These latter passages include finding Wisdom (Pro 3:13; Sir 51:16, 20, 26) and can illuminate reading Jesus depicted as Wisdom, but Strauss

⁵¹⁹ Absent in MacDonald 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2017; 2019.

⁵²⁰ MacDonald 2001; see §1.1.2.i.

⁵²¹ See Moore 1996, 191, 209-210 (confidence and independence whilst obedient to his father); Littman 2008, 106, 137; S.M. Wilson 2019.

⁵²² E.g., Marshall 1978, 125, 130; Levine and Witherington 2018, 69-72.

⁵²³ Schürmann 1969, 1:132, 138; cf. Bovon 2002–2013, 1:106, 115; Green 1997, 154.

⁵²⁴ Laurentin 1966, 137; cf. Pro 3:3c-4 LXX: ‘...and you will find favour; and give thought to [what is] good before the Lord and people (καὶ προνοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων)’; 2 Cor 8:21.

⁵²⁵ Gustav Stählin, “προκοπή, προκόπτω,” *TDNT* 6:712-714.

⁵²⁶ Strauss 1995, 122.

highlights Jesus' possession of wisdom. Strauss maintains that Luke has in view the royal-Davidic Messiah's Spirit-endowed wisdom (Isa 11:1-4; Pss. Sol. 17:37; 1 En. 49:2-3; T. Levi 18:7 [cf. 2:3]; 1QpIsa^a C 10-11 [cf. 1QSb 5:25]), explaining the Spirit's absence (Luke 1:80) appealing to its descent at Jesus' baptism (3:22) and a Spirit-χάρις association (2:40, 52; Acts 4:21-33).⁵²⁷ Bovon concludes, "Like a painter, Luke illustrates the miraculous wisdom of Jesus. Well versed in the Law, he is probably the wisest child in Israel—this was retold with pride".⁵²⁸ Schürmann and Christ see the childhood story offering a glimpse of Jesus as a bearer and teacher of Wisdom (cf. Luke 7:35; 11:31) without deliberating its depiction of Jesus as Wisdom.⁵²⁹ Nevertheless, emphasis on σοφία signals Jewish sapiential traditions in general and Wisdom. The child certainly possesses and displays wisdom, but textual clues lend to reading Wisdom's elusiveness predicated of Jesus.

Ellis emphasises Jesus' growth in and display of wisdom who is destined for exaltation as Wisdom (Luke 11:49-51).⁵³⁰ Although Grundmann also speaks of Jesus' endowed wisdom, he recognises that the story does not merely illustrate proof of development, but christologically relates sonship and wisdom (cf. Wis 2:13-17).⁵³¹ The lawless complains that the righteous 'professes to have knowledge (γνῶσιν) of God and names himself a child (παῖδα) of the Lord' (Wis 2:13) and 'boasts that God is [his] Father (πατέρα θεόν)' (2:16). At least Laurentin perceives how searching and finding (Luke 2:44-46, 48-49) recall the search for Wisdom (Pro 1:28; 2:4; 8:17; Eccl 7:23-29; Wis 6:12; Sir 6:27-28; 51:20-21).⁵³² He especially parallels Sir 24 where Wisdom is 'in the midst of her people' (ἐν μέσῳ λαοῦ αὐτῆς, 24:1), having come forth from God's mouth (24:3) to Israel to dwell in the tent in Jerusalem (24:8-12), and grows (24:12-14).⁵³³ Reading Luke's childhood story informed by the extratext will reveal how Jesus is not only depicted as possessing or displaying wisdom, but

⁵²⁷ Strauss 1995, 120-23 (following de Jonge 1978); already, Johnson 1968, 144-48. Harris (2016, 76-82) prefers Davidic covenant echoes (2 Sam 7:14).

⁵²⁸ Bovon 2002–2013, 1:115.

⁵²⁹ Christ 1970, 61; Schürmann 1969, 1:135; cf. Dormeyer 1993 (Jesus as peripatetic wisdom-teacher).

⁵³⁰ Ellis 1966, 84-86, cf. 171-72.

⁵³¹ Grundmann 1966, 94, 96.

⁵³² Laurentin 1966, 135-37. Laurentin (1966, 108) observes how 'seeking' and not 'finding' the resurrected Jesus (Luke 24:2-5, 23-24) recalls his childhood; cf. Johnson 1991, 60-62.

⁵³³ Laurentin 1966, 138-41.

characterised as Wisdom. His unknown whereabouts prefigures later withdrawals also contributing to an implicit Wisdom Christology.

4.2. Readings of Ancient Mediterranean Elusiveness in the Child Jesus Pericope

4.2.1. The Independent Youth on a Journey

Youths departing or acting without parental knowledge (§2.1.6), such as Alexander's missions without his father's awareness prefiguring future exploits and greatness (Plutarch, *Alex.* 9.1-3), offer precedents for the Lukan child Jesus' behaviour. Rather comparable is the *Telemacheia* in which youthful Telemachus slips away without his mother's awareness on a divinely ordained journey, whose maturation requires independence, courage, and authority over his elders and his father's household. Luke's childhood story involves the following: Jesus intentionally slipping away without parental knowledge (Luke 2:41-43); παῖς and τέκνον emphasising youthfulness (2:43, 48); his mother's consternation reuniting with her child who is very composed (2:48); displaying precocity conversing with elders (2:44-47); his concern for his Father's affairs and divine paternal association on a compulsory divine journey (2:49); his parents' incomprehension and his corrective response to his mother who wonders at his words (2:50, 51b); and his voluntary return, submissiveness, and continued maturation (2:51a, 52; cf. 2:40). These build a coming of age theme with a youth on an intentional, necessary, and divine journey, like the *Telemacheia*.⁵³⁴

Jesus deliberately remains in Jerusalem, slipping away unbeknown to his parents during their Passover trip (Luke 2:41-43). The twelve-year-old Jesus verges on adolescence or adulthood (2:42),⁵³⁵ but he is technically still a child displaying surpassing maturity.⁵³⁶ The narrator articulates Jesus' determination to linger (ὑπέμεινεν)⁵³⁷ without parental knowledge: 'and his parents did not know' (καὶ οὐκ

⁵³⁴ I am interested in literary-portrayed coming of age rather than historical praxes.

⁵³⁵ Coleridge 1993, 190; Parsons 2015, 58. Twelve may be a general estimation (Luke 8:43; 9:17; Acts 19:7; 24:11) (de Jonge 1978, 319-24).

⁵³⁶ The references βρέφος (2:12, 16), παιδίον (2:40), then παῖς (2:43) and τέκνον (2:48) indicate growth and development (Morris 2008, 108).

⁵³⁷ Cf. Acts 17:14. The variant ὑπέμεινεν (D N Ψ f¹ 33 [NA²⁸, 187]) also connotes intentionality. IGT appropriates this story (19:1-5/17:1-5/15:1-5; on the text tradition see Burke 2010, 127-71; 2016, 52-59; cf. 2001; 2009; 2013; 2017; Aasgaard 2009) with Greek recensions reading ἀνήλθεν (*Ga*), ἔμεινεν (*Gc*), or ὑπέμεινεν (*Gs*) (v. 1 [Burke 2001, 218-19]). Early Christians

ἔγνωσαν οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, 2:43). Extrapolating that the child is forgotten, lost, or exploiting a fortuitous opportunity is amiss. Jesus is not inadvertently left behind.⁵³⁸ Some scholars think that whether Jesus is forgotten, lost, or lingers is irrelevant, seeing a plot device with 2:49 as clarificatory.⁵³⁹ However, Coleridge rightly observes markers of Jesus’ initiative, such as ὑπέμεινεν (2:43), τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως (2:48), and δεῖ (2:49).⁵⁴⁰ Construing unintentionality diminishes missional ‘necessity’.⁵⁴¹ Telemachus also intentionally slips away without his mother’s knowledge, confessing, ‘My mother knows nothing of this’ (μήτηρ δ’ ἐμὴ οὐ τι πέπυσται, Hom., *Od.* 2.411; cf. 2.358-80; 4.703-710).

References to Jesus as παῖς and τέκνον emphasise youthfulness (Luke 2:43, 48), though he is very composed reuniting with his distressed mother (2:48). Lukan use of παῖς often means ‘servant’ (Luke 1:54, 69; 7:7; 12:45; 15:26; Acts 3:13; 2:26; 4:25, 27, 30) or ‘child’ (Luke 8:51, 54; 9:42; Acts 20:12), the latter signified in Luke 2:43.⁵⁴² Additional to general uses of τέκνον in Luke-Acts meaning ‘child’, it is used in the vocative or for endearment three times (Luke 2:48; 15:31; 16:25). Mary, anguished by Jesus’ actions, asks, ‘Child (τέκνον), why have you done (ἐποίησας) so to us?’⁵⁴³ and exclaims, ‘Behold, your father (ὁ πατήρ σου) and I, being in agony (ὀδυνώμενοι), were searching for you’ (2:48). Depicting Jesus as youthful limits evocable analogues. Dickey observes in Greek literature, “When the speaker is in fact the parent of the addressee, τέκνον is far more likely than παῖς to be used in very emotional scenes or in those where the kinship of speaker and addressee is particularly emphasized”.⁵⁴⁴ The narrative transitions from Jesus’ ‘parents’ to

interpreted Luke’s account as illustrating childhood precocity, power, and intentionality, inspiring their child Jesus stories (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.20.1-2). Origen speaks of Jesus slipping away through his parents’ midst and disappearing (*et elapsus est de medio eorum, et non apparuit*) like evading antagonists [in John] (*Hom. Luc.* 19.3), or going to heaven and returning (19.5).

⁵³⁸ Contra Esler 1987, 131; Reeve 2007, 307-308.

⁵³⁹ Loisy 1924, 127; Brown 1977, 473.

⁵⁴⁰ Coleridge 1993, 204-206.

⁵⁴¹ On δεῖ see Cosgrove 1984.

⁵⁴² Παῖς is applied *post eventum* to Jesus not only as a prophetic appellation, but assuming suffering-messianic connotations in Acts (Ménard 1957).

⁵⁴³ Radl (2003, 140) offers OT analogues to Mary’s question: Gen 12:18; 20:9; 26:10; 29:25; Exod 14:11; Num 23:11; Jdg 15:11.

⁵⁴⁴ Dickey 1996, 68, cf. 63-73 (focusing on the fifth century BCE–second century CE, but noting consistency with early poetry).

focalising through Mary who officiates for them both, inquisitive and alone speaking to her τέκνον, thus accentuating her kinship whilst minimising Joseph's parental role. Telemachus is also called πάϊς (Hom., *Od.* 4.707, 665, 727, 808, 817; 16.17, 337; 17.38) and τέκνον (2.363; 3.184, 254; 4.78; 15.125, 509; 16.61, 226; 19.22; 20.135; 23.105) emphasising youthfulness during his journey.⁵⁴⁵ Responding to Telemachus' intention to elude his mother, Eurycleia exclaims, 'Ah, beloved child (φίλε τέκνον), how has this thought come into your mind?' (2.363), and she calls him a beloved only [son] (μοῦνος ἐὼν ἀγαπητός, 2.365). Although Telemachus' nurse questions him before his departure, Penelope is distraught learning of her son's absence (4.703-710) and upon reuniting with him cries, 'you departed... secretly, against my will, to hear about your beloved father' (ᾄχεο... λάθρη, ἐμεῦ ἀέκητι, φίλου μετὰ πατρὸς ἀκουήν, 17.42-43). Both Jesus and Telemachus are depicted as youths intentionally parting from their oblivious mothers who are fretful, confessing ignorance and frustration concerning their sons' unknown whereabouts upon reuniting.⁵⁴⁶ Distancing and independency from supervision resulting in motherly concern illustrates a necessary step of maturation.

The youthful Jesus displays precocity conversing with elders (Luke 2:44-47). His parents return to Jerusalem after failing to locate him and eventually 'they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers (καθεζόμενον ἐν μέσῳ τῶν διδασκάλων)', conceivably surrounded by interlocutors,⁵⁴⁷ 'listening (ἀκούοντα) to them and questioning (ἐπερωτῶντα) them' (2:46). A three-day lapse before locating Jesus adds superfluity to his elusive conduct, underscoring his independency. He is not distressed or wandering aimlessly, but is among elders as if peers. He is no pupil, but assumes a pedagogical role by answering queries,⁵⁴⁸ presumably cultic or theological,⁵⁴⁹ dialoguing with authority: 'And all who were hearing him were amazed at his understanding and answers' (ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες αὐτοῦ

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. παιδάριον (diminutive) used for Tobias until reaching Ecbatana (Tob 6:2-11) underscores maturation whilst journeying (Moore 1996, 200).

⁵⁴⁶ Tobias' mother weeps upon his departure and his parents distressfully await his return, but aware of his journey (Tob 5:18; 10:1-7; cf. Jub. 27:13-18 [Jacob and Rebecca]); cf. MacDonald 2001, 26-27.

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. 4:30; 24:36.

⁵⁴⁸ Pace Loisy 1924, 128; Jansen 1976, 402; Coleridge 1993, 195-96. Others see parity (Green 1997, 155; Radl 2003, 139).

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. IGT 19:2 (Jesus explains difficulties in the law and prophets).

ἐπὶ τῇ συνέσει καὶ ταῖς ἀποκρίσεσιν αὐτοῦ, 2:47).⁵⁵⁰ Focalisation is through amazed witnesses, primarily Jesus' parents who are astounded (ἐξεπλάγησαν, 2:48). Jesus' public ministry will begin at Nazareth teaching in another space of worship and learning where all hearing him marvel and question his identity, involving his elusiveness (4:16-30; cf. 4:15). His pedagogical role foreshadowed as a child will be programmatic at Nazareth, displayed at the temple and during attempted entrapments (13:22, 26; 19:47; 20:21; 21:37-38; 23:5; cf. Acts 1:1; 10:37), and recalled on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-35).⁵⁵¹ Notwithstanding Luke 2:46, only Jesus is called διδάσκαλος in Luke's Gospel.⁵⁵² The reader thinking of the *Telemacheia* recalls Telemachus asserting authority amid elders. Athene makes him courageous and 'full of understanding' (πεπνυμένος) to assemble the elders who challenge him, but marvel (θαύμαζον) at his speech whilst Antinous surmises that the gods are teaching (διδάσκουσιν) him boastfulness and confidence (Hom., *Od.* 1.269-74, 354-404). Telemachus 'sat down in his father's seat and the elders gave place' (ἔζετο δ' ἐν πατρὸς θώκῳ, εἴξαν δὲ γέροντες, 2.14), then 'stood in the midst of the assembly' (στῆ δὲ μέσῃ ἀγορῇ, 2.37) to address them. Telemachus also sits and dialogues with wise elders Nestor and Menelaus concerning his father (bks. 3-4). He listens, but Athene gives him courage to ask questions and hear answers (3.75-77, 83, 243-44; 4.315-32, 593-98). Although contexts differ, both youths demonstrate competency and authority in the midst of elders by impressive dialogue.

Jesus is a youth on a necessary and divinely ordained journey concerned with his Father's affairs with whom he associates (Luke 2:49). Elision of the διδάσκαλοι for the more general πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες (2:48), which includes Jesus' parents and others, along with a shift to the issue of Jesus' whereabouts and his own interpretation (2:49) indicate that the story's primary significance is not precocity, but Jesus' behaviour and identity.⁵⁵³ Jesus questions his mother about seeking him since she should know (τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ἤδειτε ὅτι...) about his necessary participation (δεῖ εἶναι με) in his Father's affairs (ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς μου, 2:49). The phrase ἐν τοῖς

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. πάντες οἱ ἀκούσαντες ἐθαύμασαν (2:18); ἀποκρισις; θαυμάσαντες (20:26); ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες (Acts 2:12; 9:21); Jdt 11:20-21. Ascough (1996) examines reader-engaging crowd responses.

⁵⁵¹ O'Toole 2008, 13-21, 166-67; cf. Johnson 1991, 60-62.

⁵⁵² Kilgallen 1985.

⁵⁵³ See Coleridge 1993, 197.

τοῦ πατρός μου is often interpreted as ‘in my Father’s house[hold]’, referring to the Jerusalem temple (cf. b. Yom. 3.9; οἶκος: Luke 6:4; 11:51; 13:35; 19:46; Acts 7:47; Heb 3:1-6; 10:21).⁵⁵⁴ Jesus is discovered ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ (Luke 2:46), so his necessary involvement ἐν τοῖς (‘in the things/matters/affairs’ or ‘among those’) of his Father is linked to his presence there, the house of God. Early interpretations of a temple reference are evinced in the Peshitta and Syriac IGT 19:3 which have ‘my Father’s house’ (ܡܘܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܝܬܐ).⁵⁵⁵ Jesus sits in his Father’s house in the midst of assembled elders. He cryptically discloses his intentional activity and underscores his divine sonship. He contrasts his mother’s reference to Joseph as ὁ πατήρ σου (Luke 2:48) with his reference to God as πατρός μου (2:49). His use of μου rather than ἡμῶν⁵⁵⁶ incites curiosity, reminding his parents and the reader that he is υἱὸς ὑψίστου (1:32) and υἱὸς θεοῦ (1:35).⁵⁵⁷ Jesus, expressing divine sonship, relates himself intimately with God.⁵⁵⁸ Jesus defies his parents by eluding them, but necessarily in his Father’s interests according to the divine plan. Although no incognito heavenly guide accompanies Jesus, like Athene accompanying Telemachus (or Raphael accompanying Tobias in Tobit), Jesus is self-guided in harmony with God. Telemachus’ mission is also divinely ordained (Hom., *Od.* 1.88-95, 293-305) and he participates in his father’s affairs with whom he is associated. He should become resilient and resourceful (1.203-205), ousting suitors as would his father (1.253-

⁵⁵⁴ E.g., Klostermann 1929, 47; Grundmann 1966, 96; Marshall 1978, 129; Morris 2008, 108-109; cf. NIV, NASB, ESV, NRSV, NJB; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat. Lect.* 7.6; Augustine, *Serm.* 1.17; Leo, *Ep.* 16.3; Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 18.5; 20.2-3. On translations, including ‘in my Father’s house’, ‘in the affairs of my Father’ (cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.20.2; Clement, *Protr.* 9; Tertullian, *Prax.* 26), or ‘with those belonging to my Father’, see Laurentin 1966, 38-72; Weinert 1983; Sylva 1987. Some detect polysemy for the temple and divine involvement (de Jonge 1978, 331-37; Danker 1988, 77; C.F. Evans 1990, 226; Green 1997, 156-57).

⁵⁵⁵ IGT: Burke 2017, 166-67, 288-89.

⁵⁵⁶ The plural (Isa 64:8; Tob 13:4; Matt 6:9; Gal 1:3; 1 Thess 1:3; Phil 1:2; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Rom 1:7; Mal 2:10) is common, but the Davidic servant uses the singular (Ps 88:27/89:26 HB; cf. Sir 51:10). Yahweh will give shepherds for knowledge and understanding (i.e., teachers) in place of the ark of the covenant—whose *raison d’être* was to represent the divine presence in the tabernacle/temple (cf. Terrien 2000, 174-75)—asserting that his restored ‘children’ will call him ‘my Father’ (Jer 3:11-25; cf. 3:4). As the Davidic Messiah and Son of God, Jesus takes his rightful place in the temple where the ark rested (cf. Ps 132; Laurentin 1964, 146), calling God ‘my Father’ amid teachers.

⁵⁵⁷ Joseph is ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ (2:33) in terms of parenthood, but the reader is aware of Jesus’ divine sonship; see also Henrichs-Tarascenkova 2016, 138-45.

⁵⁵⁸ Luke expresses Jesus’ divine sonship in limited terms, but sufficiently conveying his surpassing divinity and intimacy with God (O’Toole 2008, 155-79).

70).⁵⁵⁹ He claims authority over his father's house and rebukes them (1.354-59, 367-82). He sits on his father's seat and stands in the midst of the elders (2.14, 37). He should not be base or witless, but wise and accomplish his work like his father (2.267-80). He takes charge over his household (2.369-70) and journeys in his father's interests according to the divine βουλή (2.372). He is concerned for his father's status, but elders interpret his conduct as insolence, since Odysseus' return entails their demise (2.214-15; 3.83; cf. 2.262-66; 3.315-31). Both youths engage in necessary divine missions away from home, though Jesus travels to Jerusalem with his parents as a precondition for remaining behind concerned with his divine Father's affairs whereas Telemachus voyages to gather information concerning his human father.

Jesus' parents 'did not understand' (οὐ συνῆκαν) his retort (τὸ ῥῆμα) expressing his requisite divine journey, causing his mother to treasure/ponder the entire ordeal ('all the matters'/πάντα τὰ ῥήματα) 'in her heart' (ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς), including wonder at his corrective response (Luke 2:50, 51b).⁵⁶⁰ Mary's pondering includes revelation in the infancy narrative,⁵⁶¹ evident by ταῦτα (2:19) omitted in 2:51b.⁵⁶² She ponders Jesus' divine-human nature⁵⁶³ and progressively learns about his messiahship,⁵⁶⁴ as does the reader, despite previous revelation. She perceives Jesus' divine favour and ceases reproof, but ponders his comportment, authority, and identity.⁵⁶⁵ The reader distances from the parents failing to realise that Jesus remains behind, but identifies with them not fully comprehending Jesus' unanswered cryptic utterance and emulating pondering (cf. 2:19).⁵⁶⁶ The reader also contemplates broader thematic and christological implications. Jesus' parents nevertheless join the reader in

⁵⁵⁹ Additionally, Telemachus resembles Odysseus with crafty speech (3.120-25) and other traits/mannerisms (4.141-46, 609-611; cf. 2.267-80).

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. Gen 37:11 (πατὴρ αὐτοῦ διετήρησεν τὸ ῥῆμα).

⁵⁶¹ Meyer 1964, 47; Radl 2003, 141-42.

⁵⁶² De Jonge 1978, 337-38.

⁵⁶³ Spencer 2008, 110.

⁵⁶⁴ Morris 2008, 109.

⁵⁶⁵ Parental obedience is imperative (Exod 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lev 19:3; 20:9; Deut 5:16; 21:18-21; Pro 19:26; 20:20; 23:22, 25; 28:24; 29:15; 30:17; Sir 3; 7:27; 23:14; 41:17), exemplified in Tobit (see Rabenau 1994, 32-38).

⁵⁶⁶ See Darr 1992, 62, 184 n. 3; Dinkler 2013, 58-59. The reader oscillates between 'identifying' with and 'distancing' from characters and the narrator (Darr 1992, 31, cf. 85-126; 1998, 52).

recognising Jesus' separation as deliberate and obligatory. Comparatively, Penelope wonders at Telemachus' corrective response and assertion of authority in his father's house after returning (Hom., *Od.* 21.343-55 [354-55]): 'She then, astonished (θαμβήσασα), went back to her chamber, for she stored in her heart the wise word of her son (παιδὸς γὰρ μῦθον πεπνυμένον ἔνθετο θυμῷ)'.⁵⁶⁷ Both youths display maturity and authority whose corrective words and assertiveness amaze and impact their mothers.

The reader (re-)evaluates the misunderstanding motif in view of recurrences. Jesus' dialogue with the teachers causes 'amazement' (Luke 2:47), suggesting perplexity (cf. 1:63; 8:25; 11:38; 24:22-24, 41; Acts 2:7-8, 12; 9:21; 10:45; 12:16),⁵⁶⁸ and his first utterance is cryptic and incomprehensible (Luke 2:49-51). Characters will misunderstand or not comprehend the content or significance of his actions and utterances,⁵⁶⁹ casting him as elusive, not merely for his mysterious kerygma or pedagogical *modus operandi* (i.e., parabolic instruction), but part of his character (cf. 4:32; 24:19). Although the reader may identify with Jesus' parents in striving to understand his childhood behaviour or intricacies of his divine sonship, they distance from them in terms of disparate knowledge, and later will distance from other misunderstanding/uncomprehending characters from whom knowledge is concealed.⁵⁷⁰ Among the Synoptics, Luke accentuates the misunderstanding motif with incorporated supernatural restraint and instances in special Lukan material and Acts.⁵⁷¹ The child's incomprehensible utterance is recalled when the Nazarenes question his identity as Joseph's son (Luke 4:22). Jesus' actions frequently cause spectators to question his identity (τίς + ἔστιν + οὗτος: 5:21; 7:49; 8:25; 9:9; cf. 9:18-20; 19:3).⁵⁷² His parable of the sower encourages hearing with understanding (8:4-

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. 1.325-61. The μῦθον πεπνυμένον refers to content, not the speech itself (Zanker 2019, 160). Later, Telemachus rebukes Penelope for not embracing Odysseus (23.96-103).

⁵⁶⁸ Kingsbury 1991, 82, 158 n. 24.

⁵⁶⁹ Kingsbury 1991, 109-139 (disciples); Frein (1993) differentiates incomprehension (inability to understand), misunderstanding (incorrect understanding), and incomplete understanding, seeing the motif lending to Saviour, Son of God, and Elijianic Christologies. I refer to these cognitive errancies collectively as the 'misunderstanding motif' for brevity, though mindful of nuances.

⁵⁷⁰ Cf. Frein 1993, 338.

⁵⁷¹ See Frein 1993, 333-35; cf. Kurz 1993, 149-52 (Gentile idolatry and Jewish ignorance about Jesus); Buckwalter 1996, 104-107.

⁵⁷² Cf. Green 1995, 61; Morris 2008, 138.

15), yet the disciples are ‘given to know (δέδοται γνῶναι) the mysteries of the kingdom of God’ whereas others do not understand (μὴ συνιῶσιν) his parables (8:9-10). Within this context of hearing/(in)comprehension Jesus’ mother re-enters the narrative with his siblings attempting to see him, but he designates his familial propinquity as ‘those who hear the word of God and do it’ (8:19-21; cf. 9:59-62; 14:25-26). During the transfiguration, Peter offers to make dwellings ‘not knowing’ (μὴ εἰδώς) Jesus’ utterance (9:33). The disciples’ silence afterwards is due to awe or incomprehension (9:36).⁵⁷³ The reader infers an unstated power of supernatural restraint (likely God or Jesus) during Jesus’ passion predictions when the narrator ascribes the disciples’ epistemic errancies (ἠγνόουν... μὴ αἰσθωνται, 9:45; οὐδὲν... συνῆκαν... οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον, 18:34) to concealment expressed with grammatical passives (παρακεκαλυμμένον, 9:45; κεκρυμμένον, 18:34).⁵⁷⁴ The disciples understand Jesus’ messiahship and ‘Son of Man’ self-references,⁵⁷⁵ but fail to comprehend his necessary suffering, and thus his journey.⁵⁷⁶ They also demonstrate deficient understanding of the kingdom and his authority (9:46-50; cf. 9:41; 22:24). Although the Father has hidden (ἀπέκρυψας) understanding from the ‘wise and intelligent’ (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν), including the true identities of the Father and Son, Jesus reveals (ἀποκαλύψαι) truths to whomever he wills, such as the disciples (10:21-24). Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem characterises the people as unrecognising, so matters are ‘hidden’ (ἐκρύβη) from their eyes (19:42). Hiddenness is partly due to failure to realise the divine visitation through Jesus (19:44; cf. 1:68, 78; 7:16; Acts 15:14).⁵⁷⁷ The disciples further betray their faulty understanding by falling asleep rather than remaining diligent (Luke 22:45-46) and by attempting to prevent Jesus’ arrest (22:49-51). Jesus’ statements that things hidden (κρυπτόν), secret (ἀπόκρυφον), and

⁵⁷³ Dinkler 2013, 46.

⁵⁷⁴ Cf. 9:22; Mark 9:32 (no restraint); κρύπτω used of Wisdom: Job 28:21; Sir 20:30; 41:14; cf. Isa 29:14. These passives (Luke 9:45; 18:34) attribute incomprehension to a supernatural force (Dillon 1978, 133; Frein 1993, 329); incomprehension is not simply from scriptural misunderstanding (contra Litwak 2005, 137-43). Although Jesus attests to the disciples’ knowledge of mysteries (8:10) or assumes their ability to understand (9:44), casting doubt on divine intent (so Green 1997, 390), Jesus knowingly makes incomprehensible disclosures (e.g., 2:49; 4:23-24). MacDonald (1998, 143; 2015a, 303-305) parallels Peter’s confession in Mark 8:29-33 with Eurycleia recognising Odysseus (Hom., *Od.* 19.320-505). By aligning this Homeric episode with the Lukan account, Athene controlling Penelope’s mind (19.478-79) is akin to incomprehension in Luke 9:45.

⁵⁷⁵ Pace Dillon 1978, 39-50.

⁵⁷⁶ Morris 2008, 87-88, 193-94; Green 1997, 390; cf. Conzelmann 1960, 60-65, 197-99.

⁵⁷⁷ Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 2:1256; followed by Frein 1993, 337.

concealed (συγκεκριαλυμμένον) will be manifest (φανερόν), known (γνωσθῆ; γνωσθήσεται), and revealed (ἀποκαλυφθήσεται) (8:17; 12:2) begin to find fulfilment following his resurrection (24:32, 44-49).⁵⁷⁸ Stephen's comment that the people failed to understand (συνιέναι) God's plan of deliverance through Moses (Acts 7:25) mirrors and summarises the misunderstanding of Jesus' mission. The prevalence of Jesus' peculiar activities and enigmatic speech leading to cognitive errancies of characters and the reader alike, prefigured by the childhood story, contribute to his elusive character.

The child Jesus returns home from his journey, submits to his parents, and further matures (Luke 2:51a, 52; cf. 2:40).⁵⁷⁹ His active role continues as he is the grammatical subject of verbs: 'and he went down (κατέβη) with them and he came (ἦλθεν) to Nazareth' (2:51a).⁵⁸⁰ The detail ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος (2:51a) implies preceding defiance, but his compliance to the divine plan supersedes parental obedience. Commentators hesitant to acknowledge an incompatibility suggest that obeying God is parental obedience,⁵⁸¹ but this falters given Mary's expression of Jesus' unbecoming conduct (2:48). Jesus' preference for the divine will occasionally conflicting with familial commitments recurs (8:19-21; 14:12-14, 26-27; 16:28-31; 18:29). As God's faithful Son, Jesus remains in control,⁵⁸² including wilful subjection.⁵⁸³ Parallel descriptions of his development enclosing the story between his infancy and adulthood indicate maturation before, during, and after his journey: 'And the child was growing and being strengthened (ἠϋξανεα καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο), being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him' (2:40); 'And Jesus was advancing (προέκοπτεα) in wisdom and in maturity (ἡλικία) and in grace before God and people' (2:52). Telemachus must return home and demonstrate maturity (Hom., *Od.* 15), since he is beyond an age of childish ways (1.295-96; cf. 3.199-200), despite his antagonists hoping that his ὁδός fails and he perishes before his youthful prime

⁵⁷⁸ Similarly, C.F. Evans 1990, 426.

⁵⁷⁹ Jesus revises the customary social setting of familial-hierarchical dominance, though reinstates it by resubmission (Brawley 2020, 54).

⁵⁸⁰ C.F. Evans 1990, 227; Green 1997, 156.

⁵⁸¹ Schürmann 1969, 1:137; Marshall 1978, 130; C.F. Evans 1990, 227; but cf. Green 1997, 155-57 (divine commitment produces behaviour against parental expectations).

⁵⁸² Cf. vulnerable child heroes in Greek myth (Pache 2004).

⁵⁸³ Similarly, Davis 1982, 226.

(4.663-68). Whereas Jesus returns with his parents in subjection and develops even after demonstrating surpassing maturity and independence, Telemachus must return to prove his maturity and independence which are overdue. Nevertheless, just as Telemachus' journey begins with his mother and moves outward from his household into the world,⁵⁸⁴ so Jesus' confrontations and encounters will move outward, beginning with his mother (Luke 2:41-52), followed by his compatriots (4:16-30), then Galilee (4:31ff.), then towards Jerusalem (9:51ff.).

The reader, thinking of extratextual analogues to Luke's childhood story, appeals to more than favourable development and child prodigy motifs across ancient literature, but also to an exceptional and celebrated maturing youth myth—the *Telemacheia*. This reading entails numerous similarities located in recognisably distinct sections of single compositions. Both characterise independent youths departing without parental knowledge on necessary and divinely ordained journeys who demonstrate maturity by maternal separation, emulating elders, asserting authority, and participating in 'household' affairs as faithful sons, all of which form coming of age themes. Isolated correspondences might seem coincidental or ordinary, but the constellation of parallels in a relatively comparable sequence is remarkable. The *Telemacheia* opens the *Odyssey* and comprises a large thematic portion of the poem. Luke's childhood story forms part of the Gospel's opening as a significant and proleptic illustration. Aligning these stories would offer insights to Luke's reader, such as Jesus' precocity outclassing Telemachus' immaturity for their respective ages, or Jesus' equanimity and engagement in his Father's affairs outperforming Telemachus' insecurity and uncontrollability of his father's household. Telemachus' maturation is belated, but formed through challenges. Contrastively, Jesus exhibits surpassing maturity at an unexpected, transitional age; his experience is less challenging or educational, but revelatory for characters and the reader. This comparative reading illuminates Jesus' superiority and exceptionally theomorphic identity. Considering potential intertextuality, although deliberate mimesis or echoing cannot be confidently established, Luke's story plausibly shares an independent youth tradition, especially with the *Telemacheia*.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ Garland 1990, 172-73; see §2.1.6.

⁵⁸⁵ Applying MacDonald's (2015a, 5-7) seven criteria for assessing mimesis, we observe the following: (1) the *Telemacheia* was 'accessible' to Luke and ancient authors, the latter recognising

This reading illuminates Son of God and divine visitor Christologies. Unlike Telemachus to whom divine revelation is given, Jesus possesses intuitive knowledge of the divine will and acts in accordance with it, revealing his divine sonship. Luke appropriates Jesus' journey to Jerusalem from Mark (cf. 8:31; 9:30; 10:1, 17, 32-33, 46), creating a broad framework and significant motif to which he ties other material of Jesus' ministry.⁵⁸⁶ The journey motif occurs already in Luke's opening narratives with accounts of John (1:80; 3:1-20), Joseph and Mary (2:4, 22), and Jesus' childhood (2:42).⁵⁸⁷ The childhood story features *Reisenotizen* such as ὁδός (2:44),⁵⁸⁸ δεῖ (2:49),⁵⁸⁹ and Jesus and his parents 'proceeding' (ἐπορεύοντο, 2:41) and 'going up' (ἀναβαίνόντων, 2:42) to Jerusalem. Along with the presentation of Jesus in the temple (2:21-39), this story anticipates his adulthood journey to Jerusalem and arrival during Passover.⁵⁹⁰ Already during childhood, Jesus' elusive character emerges in obedience to his Father in Jerusalem, including his submissive return. Ironically, he will submit to arrest in Jerusalem during Passover in obedience to God's will as his Son (21:27-28; 22:1-7, 16, 21-22, 41-54, 70), after rebuking leaders for failing to recognise the time of their ἐπισκοπή (19:28-44 [44]) and amazing witnesses with teachings in the temple (19:45-21:38). His childhood visitation in the context of a journey also prefigures his journeying visitations to Nazareth and on the Emmaus road at the Gospel's conclusion.⁵⁹¹ The childhood pericope illustrates the first visitation of God's Son who begins his necessary journey, both prefigured in the

Telemachus' coming of age journey (§§1.3; 2.1.6); (2) 'analogy' occurs with other ancient texts imitating or showing some relationship with the *Odyssey* and, more specifically, the *Telemacheia* (e.g., Tobit; Jubilees); (3) parallels are 'dense', (4) mostly though not entirely in a similar 'order', (5) and fairly 'distinctive', but lack close lexical contacts; (6) meaningful interpretive implications show 'interpretability'; and (7) 'ancient or Byzantine recognitions' of similarities between Luke-Acts and the *Odyssey* are evident (MacDonald's [1998; 2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2003; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2016a; 2019] research establishes criteria 1, 2, and 7).

⁵⁸⁶ Bultmann 1963, 363-64, cf. 336; Franklin 1975, 58-61 (especially rejection and visitation for christological suffering); Nolland 1989-1993, 2:527.

⁵⁸⁷ Filson 1970, 70.

⁵⁸⁸ Baban 2006, 174-76.

⁵⁸⁹ Robinson 1960, 24.

⁵⁹⁰ Laurentin 1966, 95-103; Elliott 1971; Fiorenza 1982, 399.

⁵⁹¹ Similarly, Baban 2006, 114, 175.

infancy material and together with it forming an *inclusio* with his adulthood arrival to the Jerusalem temple as part of the divine visitation theme.⁵⁹²

4.2.2. The Elusive Child Jesus as Elusive Wisdom

The child Jesus resembles elusive Wisdom by his association with understanding as a youth, his deliberate elusion, being the object of a seeking-finding motif (foreshadowing withdrawals), and his expression of intimate filial relationship with God whilst sojourning in the Jerusalem temple among Israel's literati (§3.1.6). The youthful Jesus was πληρούμενον σοφία (Luke 2:40) and προέκοπτεν [ἐν τῇ] σοφία (2:52).⁵⁹³ Sapiential traditions commonly refer to readers or possessors of wisdom as 'children', such as Proverbs and Sirach (cf. Wis 2:13, 18). Moreover, Wisdom may be interpreted as God's begotten cosmic child rejoicing at his works in his presence, the object of his delight who herself delights in humanity (Pro 8:22-31). The child Jesus develops favourably in the presence of God and people (Luke 2:40, 52), faithful to his heavenly Father (2:49). Jesus displays understanding (σύνεσις: 2:47)⁵⁹⁴ conversing with teachers in the temple, doubtless torah specialists.⁵⁹⁵ This also contrasts with his parents' lack of understanding after his cryptic statement (negated συνήμι: 2:50). Σύνεσις occurs frequently with Wisdom (Pro 1:7; 2:2-6; 9:10; 24:3; Job 12:13, 16; Sir 1:4; 17:7; 39:6; 50:27; Isa 11:2; Jer 28:15; Bar 3:14; Dan 2:20-21; cf. 5:11-12),⁵⁹⁶ including for maturity (Pro 9:6). Understanding is hidden or withdrawn in judgment, thus sought but not found (Isa 29:14; 4 Ezra 5:9c-10a; cf. 2 Bar. 48:36). Like Wisdom, its location is uncertain (Job 28:20-21).⁵⁹⁷ It is associated with divine instruction and sages (Sir 6:35; 8:9). Wisdom is obtained through the fear of the Lord and torah-obedience, but remains elusive for those

⁵⁹² Lanier (2014) sees temple language and Jesus' temple arrival recalling Yahwistic re-visitiation (Ezek 8-11, 43).

⁵⁹³ Cf. wisdom absent in John's stated development (1:80). IGT 19:4/17:4 adds Jesus' interlocutors commenting that they have neither seen nor heard such glory and wisdom.

⁵⁹⁴ Among NT Gospels, σύνεσις occurs again only in Mark 12:33 ('greatest commandments'); cf. 1 Cor 1:19 (Isa 29:14; Job 5:13); divinely derived and attained through Christ: Eph 3:4; Col 1:9; 2:2; 2 Tim 2:7.

⁵⁹⁵ If Pro 1-9 is a Levitical product, Wisdom may be the divine patroness of Levitical educational duties, namely teaching and writing (Smith 2001, 172-73).

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. Jdt 8:29; 11:20-21.

⁵⁹⁷ Wisdom and understanding (חָכְמָה/σύνεσις) are synonymous in 28:20 with third person singular verbs in 28:21: 'she is concealed' (הִתְלַחֲפָה)/'escaped notice' (λέληθεν).

without understanding (ἀσύνετοι, 15:1-8 [7]). Unlike youthful Ben Sira seeking Wisdom at the temple (51:13-17; cf. 50:27), the youthful Jesus displays σοφία and σύνεσις at the temple in divine obedience.

Foregrounded or reduplicated ‘seeking-finding’ terminology, focalisations through the parents (Luke 2:43-46, 48, 50, 51b), and contextual details in Luke’s story give significant place to the search for the elusive Jesus, evoking elusive Wisdom.⁵⁹⁸ Jesus’ parents ‘searched’ (ἀνεζήτησαν, Luke 2:44) among relatives and acquaintances, but ‘not finding’ (μὴ εὐρόντες, 2:45) him, they returned to Jerusalem ‘searching’ (ἀναζητοῦντες). They eventually ‘found’ (εὑρον, 2:46) him in the temple, the renowned location of God’s presence and headquarters of Jewish sapiential discourse. Mary tells Jesus, ἐζητοῦμέν σε (2:48) and he responds, τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με (2:49). Αναζητέω, ζητέω, and εὐρίσκω each occur twice with Jesus as the object of a concentrated seeking-finding motif.⁵⁹⁹

I expand Laurentin’s observations, including beyond his specific alignment with Sir 24 to Wisdom traditions more collectively. Those who fear the Lord seek and find Wisdom, unlike the disobedient (ζητέω or compound forms and/or εὐρίσκω: Pro 1:28; 2:3-5; 8:17; 14:6; 24:14; Eccl 7:23-29; 8:16-17; Wis 6:12-16; 8:2, 18; Sir 6:27-28; 24:34; 51:20-21).⁶⁰⁰ Mary and Joseph struggle to locate Jesus despite revelation of his identity and roles, but eventually find him. Wisdom is difficult to find (εὐρίσκω: Job 28:12-13, 20), but God knows Wisdom’s location in godliness (28:23, 28). Jesus’ parents should know that he was obediently in God’s affairs/place (Luke 2:48-49). Recalling Wisdom depicted as God’s faithful child in his presence (Pro 8:22-31) or a divine intermediary sage/scribe bringing wisdom to people illuminates God’s Son sharing his understanding with the intelligentsia. Wisdom comes to dwell in Jerusalem among Israel (Sir 24:7-12; cf. 1 En. 42:1-3). She is sought (ζητέω: Sir 4:11; 6:27) and found (εὐρίσκω: 25:10), particularly at the temple (51:13-14, 20-

⁵⁹⁸ These terms are non-technical, but form the seeking-finding motif and are evocative in similar contexts (Laurentin 1966, 137).

⁵⁹⁹ Only Luke uses ἀναζητέω in the NT (cf. Acts 11:25). Although used generally for ‘searching’, it occurs in sapiential contexts. Philo (*Ebr.* 1.112-13) says that only rulers are entrusted to dig the well of σοφία, searching it out (ἀναζητῆσαι) and achieving it (cf. Num 21:18; Deut 32:1-43; *Sacr.* 1.64; *Plant.* 1.80; *Migr.* 1.218; *Fug.* 1.137). He comments that seeking (ζητέω; ἀναζητέω) to find (εὐρίσκω) God is like going to the tabernacle, which is σοφία, where the wise person dwells (*Leg.* 3.46-47).

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Pro 1-9; Eccl 3:11; Wis 13:6; Sir 4:11-19; 6:22; 14:20-27; 4 Ezra 5:9-10; 2 Bar. 14:8-9; 44:14; 48:36.

25).⁶⁰¹ Wisdom dwells with Israel and is easily found in the form of torah, not by complacency (Bar 3:9-4:4; ἐκζητέω [cf. ἐκζητητής]: 3:23; εὐρίσκω: 3:15, 30). Jesus' concerned parents search diligently and find him sitting in the temple among teachers, probably discussing torah. Among examples from Qumran texts, the command to seek self-hidden Wisdom is notable (4Q213 1 II [+ 2] 5-7). The seeking-finding motif applies also to Yahweh (ζητέω or compound forms and εὐρίσκω: Deut 4:29; Jer 29:13-14; Isa 65:1; Amos 5:5-6; Hos 5:6, 15; cf. 1 Chron 28:29).⁶⁰²

Jesus' parents suppose (νομίσαντες) that he is in their caravan (τῆ συνοδίᾳ) and travel a day's journey (ἡμέρας ὁδόν) (Luke 2:44). The reader knows that seeking Jesus among τοῖς συγγενεῦσιν καὶ τοῖς γνωστοῖς (2:44) will be of no avail—a search demonstrating the parents' obliviousness, distress, and need to return (2:45)⁶⁰³—since this symbolic realm contrasts with that of God wherein Jesus is found (τοῦ πατρὸς μου, 2:49).⁶⁰⁴ The reader suspects this since the infancy narrative reveals the divine sonship of Jesus whose first action is eluding family. Later, Jesus is not always found among family (cf. 8:19-21; 9:59-62; 14:26). Like Wisdom, Jesus is divinely begotten and remains in God's presence.

The story of seeking and [not] finding the wisdom-filled child of God encourages reading Jesus represented as elusive Wisdom. This portrayal does not entail Wisdom's every characteristic, such as pre-existence.⁶⁰⁵ Some scholars rightly note an absence of Jesus' pre-existence with Wisdom associations, but hastily dismiss a Wisdom Christology.⁶⁰⁶ Nevertheless, this story contributes to other Wisdom traditions (including Jesus-Wisdom associations) supporting an implicit Wisdom Christology:

⁶⁰¹ Cf. ζητέω (51:13); ἐκζητέω (51:14, 21); εὐρίσκω (51:16, 20; cf. 51:26-27).

⁶⁰² Also to love (Song 3:1-4) (Schroer 2000, 27-28). Cf. 2 Chron 9:23 (kings ἐζήτουν Solomon to hear his divinely bestowed σοφία)

⁶⁰³ Rapprochement develops with the parents approaching the reader's knowledge who contemplates Jesus' motivation (Coleridge 1993, 191-93).

⁶⁰⁴ Wolter 2016, 1:150; cf. Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 18.2; 19.5.

⁶⁰⁵ Some scholars see Jesus-Wisdom associations [in Matthew/Luke] evincing pre-existence: Suggs 1970; Christ 1970; Hamerton-Kelly 1973; cf. Hengel 1977, 76-82; 1996, 153-74; Deutsch 1987; see Gathercole's (2006, 193-209) critique.

⁶⁰⁶ E.g., Green 1997, 475 n. 84; Bovon 2006, 179 n. 48; cf. Dunn 1980, 196-209. Matthew's Wisdom Christology is more pronounced (see Suggs 1970; Deutsch 1987; 1990; Gench 1997; cf. Johnson 1974). Paul identifies Jesus with Wisdom and is aware of hidden Wisdom (1 Cor 1:24, 30; 2:7-8; cf. Col 2:3; Eph 3:8-12).

- Being harangued as a wrongdoer, Jesus refers to himself as Wisdom's child, replying, 'even Wisdom is justified by all her children' (Luke 7:35; alluding to Pro 8:32/Sir 4:11);⁶⁰⁷
- Jesus asks how much longer he must be with and endure the faithless and corrupt generation (Luke 9:41), similar to Wisdom's lament (Pro 1:20-33; 1 En. 41:1-3);⁶⁰⁸
- Jesus, the rejected Son of Man, wanders with nowhere to dwell (Luke 9:58; cf. 9:44-45; 18:8, 34), like rejected Wisdom (1 En. 42; 94:5);⁶⁰⁹
- Jesus, thanking his Father for concealing and revealing truths, represents himself as possessing and selectively revealing exclusive divine knowledge (Luke 10:21-24; cf. Matt 11:25-27; John 3:35; 5:19-23, 26-27; 8:28; 14:13; 17:1-2);⁶¹⁰
- Jesus is greater than Solomon in all his wisdom (Luke 11:31);
- Jesus quotes ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ—possibly a self-referential *autonomasia*—as the prophetic speaker about persecuted prophets and apostles (Luke 11:49);⁶¹¹
- Jesus likens himself to a rejected mother bird desiring to gather her offspring (Luke 13:31-35);⁶¹²
- and Jesus gives his disciples supernatural wisdom (Luke 21:15; cf. Acts 6:3, 10).⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁷ Christ 1970, 63-80; Navone 1970, 12-15; Morris 2008, 165; Parsons 2015, 127; Dennert 2015. Gathercole (2003) argues that Jesus' aphorism expresses Wisdom's 'dissociation' from her people/children (despite interpreting John and Jesus as Wisdom's envoys/children).

⁶⁰⁸ Bovon 2002–2013, 387 n. 35.

⁶⁰⁹ Christ 1970, 70; Hamerton-Kelly 1973, 29 (the σοφός has no οἰκία, συγγένεια, or πατρίς [Philo, *Abr.* 31]).

⁶¹⁰ Christ 1970, 81-99; Jacobson 1978; Kloppenborg 1978; Deutsch 1987, 103-105; Fletcher-Louis 2015, 80. Dunn (1980, 198-99) is critical, pointing out that traditions emphasise Wisdom's hidden source/locus. Although Tuckett (1996, 218-21, 275-82, cf. 165-208, 325-54) acknowledges that Wisdom and God are mutually known (Job 28:1-27; Pro 8:12; Wis 7:25-28; 8:3-9; 9:4-11; Sir 1:6, 8; Bar 3:15-32) and Wisdom is a revealer (Wis 7:21; 9:17; Sir 4:18), he suggests that divine-filial language and Wisdom allusions here (Q) represent Jesus as Wisdom's envoy, supporting a 'prophetic Christology'. Grindheim (2011, 174-76, 183-84) stresses God-Wisdom relational notions explaining Jesus' redefined filial intimacy with the Father qualitatively exceptional vis-à-vis divine-human relationships (maintaining hierarchy).

⁶¹¹ Christ 1970, 120-35; Marshall 1978, 502-504; Parsons 2015, 198. This verbalises the divine plan of sending John and Jesus followed by apostles, who are rejected/maltreated as were prophets (11:50-52; cf. 10:1-16).

⁶¹² Bultmann 1963, 114-15; Christ 1970, 136-52; Lanier 2018, 132-40; Günther 2020.

Depictions of Jesus as Wisdom and as Wisdom's envoy/child are not incompatible.

Fitzmyer is sceptical of extending 'Wisdom' to the child Jesus, mainly based on its feminine grammatical gender (Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek) and Sirach's Wisdom-torah association.⁶¹⁴ However, grammatical gender is no obstacle for Luke⁶¹⁵ whose Jesus depicts himself as a mother 'hen' (ὄρνις... ἐαυτῆς, Luke 13:34). Jewish and Christian literature reflects no hesitancy associating Wisdom with 'masculine' figures, including God and Jesus.⁶¹⁶ Origen (*Hom. Luc.* 18.3; 19.5) comments on Luke's childhood story enjoining his audience to seek Jesus, the Word and Wisdom of God, who will be found in the temple among the Church's teachers, not among those who do not possess him. Moreover, a Jesus-Wisdom association juxtaposes torah as embodied Wisdom with Jesus as Spirit-filled bearer of Wisdom. Just as Wisdom embodied in torah dwells among Israel, particularly in the Jerusalem temple, so Jesus remains in Jerusalem among his people in the temple discussing torah. Associating the child Jesus with elusive Wisdom prepares Luke's reader for an emergent and implicit Wisdom Christology.

Jesus' cryptic riposte (Luke 2:49) anticipates others. He indirectly answers a question with a puzzling rejoinder implying his divinely sourced authority (like John's baptism), then reiterates this in a parable of a vineyard owner's 'beloved son', respectively symbolising God and himself (20:1-18). Neither does he answer perspicuously when Jewish authorities ask if he is the Messiah, but says, 'If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God' (22:67-69).⁶¹⁷ Jesus, a defendant on trial, claims his impending exaltation signifying his rule as judge.⁶¹⁸ When asked if he is the Son of God, he replies, 'You say that I am' (22:70). His responses avoid unequivocal affirmations, but imply the veracity of his interrogators'

⁶¹³ Christ 1970, 90 n. 337 ("*Spender der Weisheit*"); Fletcher-Louis 1997, 25.

⁶¹⁴ Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:437.

⁶¹⁵ Neither for John's Wisdom Christology (see Scott 1992).

⁶¹⁶ Fiorenza 1994, 131-62; McAlister 2018 (western Christians identifying Wisdom/Jesus seeking lost humanity in Luke 15:8-10). Synoptic tradition reflects memories of Jesus depicted as Wisdom (Robinson 1975 [not incarnate]; Dunn 1999 [incarnate]; Barton 1999).

⁶¹⁷ Cf. Dan 7:13; Ps 109:1/110:1 HB.

⁶¹⁸ Bock 1994/1996, 2:1797; Brown 1994, 1:487; Schnabel 1999, 225-26.

confessions that he is the Messiah, the Son of God.⁶¹⁹ Their response that no further testimony is needed having heard a confession from Jesus' own lips (22:71) is ironic since Jesus has not given an unambiguous confession and further testimony is required. Herod extensively questions Jesus, 'but he did not answer him' (23:9).⁶²⁰ The reader might think of Dionysus' evasive dialogue with king Pentheus,⁶²¹ how the god maintains self-composure and implicitly affirms his identity when interrogated (Eur., *Bacch.* 460-518).⁶²² Pentheus asks where Dionysus is and the stranger replies that the king cannot see him though he is near, so Pentheus calls for the stranger's arrest (500-503). In any case, Jesus' 'silence of defiance/deference'⁶²³ reflects his wisdom (Wis 8:12; cf. Sir 20:8)⁶²⁴ and identity as suffering servant (Isa 53:7).⁶²⁵

Jesus' separation is consistent with his withdrawals. Good determines that whilst the withdrawal motif in Matthew (*ἀναχωρέω*: 4:12; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21) shows similarities with Moses (Exod 2:15) and Jewish forces (1-2 Maccabees), its background is Wisdom's withdrawal, particularly after visiting earth with nowhere to dwell and reacting to hostility or rejection (Pro 1:28 [cf. 1:24-25]; Bar 3:9-4:4; Sir 24; 1 En. 42; 84:3; 94:5; 4 Ezra 5:9; 2 Bar. 48:36).⁶²⁶ For Good, the Matthean Jesus' withdrawal from hostility rather than opposing it neither brings [personified] Iniquity (1 En. 42) nor signals the eschaton (4 Ezra; 2 Baruch), but is justified (Matt 11:16-19; cf. Wis 1-3) and facilitates the gospel going to Gentiles, thus fulfilling prophecy

⁶¹⁹ Although Green (1997, 796) deduces that Jesus turns their accusation into a confession, he takes ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι as a clear affirmation. The Lukan Jesus answers questions more among NT Gospels, but is evasive on trial whilst giving some affirmative answers about his identity (Schnabel 1999). Jesus never overtly identifies as the Messiah (see O'Neill 1969).

⁶²⁰ Cf. Mark 14:61-62 (clearly affirming the second question); 15:2-5; Matt 26:62-64; 27:11-14.

⁶²¹ See §2.1.1.ii.

⁶²² So Stibbe (1992, 142-43; 1993, 242) for John 18-19.

⁶²³ Dinkler 2013, 46. Darr (1992, 151-58) shows how Jesus' behaviour contrasts with typical philosopher-versus-tyrant/prophet-versus-king accounts. Schnabel (1999, 233-39) assesses parallels of silence during interrogation (e.g., Jesus bar Ananias [Josephus, *J.W.* 6.303-305]) or before trial (e.g., Mariamme [*Ant.* 15.235]) and of Socrates' unwillingness to save himself.

⁶²⁴ So Danker (1988, 365-66), also paralleling accused philosophers (Plato [Diog. Laert. 3.19]; Timon [9.115]). See also Bock 1994/1996, 2:1819-20. Jesus' stubbornness or arrogance is not incompatible with Wisdom traditions (*pace* Schnabel 1999, 246-47).

⁶²⁵ Green (1997, 805 n. 50) defends this Isaianic allusion based on passion correspondences despite lacking linguistic contacts.

⁶²⁶ Good 1990. Cf. *ἀναχωρέω* for other characters (Matt 2:12-13 [x2], 14, 22; 9:24; 27:5).

(Matt 12:1-21; cf. Isa 42:1-4).⁶²⁷ Wisdom traditions likewise illuminate Jesus' withdrawals in Luke which feature other terminology (e.g., ὑποχωρέω; ἐξέρχομαι; πορεύομαι) due to stylistic preference and the journey motif.⁶²⁸

Before Jesus preaches publically, the Spirit leads him into isolation (Luke 4:1-13). He resembles Wisdom by departing from hostility at Nazareth (ἐπορεύετο, 4:30) rather than opposing it. His reputation spreads after exorcisms (4:37), so 'going out, he proceeded (ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη) into a desert place', but crowds follow 'seeking (ἐπεζήτουν) him' and 'holding him back, not to proceed (πορεύεσθαι) from them' (4:42).⁶²⁹ He departs since he 'must' (δεῖ) preach elsewhere (4:43-44). Reports spread (5:15; cf. 4:14-15), 'but he was withdrawing (ὑποχωρῶν) to the wilderness and praying' (5:16).⁶³⁰ Praying is secondary to retreating from crowds. After Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath, some scribes and Pharisees become filled with 'folly' (ἄνοια)⁶³¹ and plot against him, but 'he went out (ἐξελθεῖν) to the mountain to pray' (6:10-12; cf. 9:28).⁶³² His withdrawal from foolish antagonists recalls elusive Wisdom. Jesus attracts excessive attention despite avoiding it. His reputation reaches Herod, so he 'withdrew privately' (ὑπεχώρησεν κατ' ἰδίαν) to Bethsaida with his disciples, though welcoming pursuers (9:7-11; cf. 9:18).⁶³³ Some Pharisees tell him to depart from hostility: 'Go out and proceed (ἐξελθε καὶ πορεύου) from here, since Herod wishes to

⁶²⁷ Good 1990, 10-12.

⁶²⁸ In the NT only Luke uses ὑποχωρέω (6:12; 9:10); cf. ἀναχωρέω not of Jesus (Acts 23:19; 26:31). Identifying Wisdom allusions with Jesus' withdrawals is based more on conceptual affinities than lexical contacts.

⁶²⁹ Mark 1:35-38 gives no hint of hostility, but Jesus' reputation attracts crowds (ἐξέρχομαι: 1:35; καταδιώκω: 1:36 [NT *hapax legomenon*]; εὐρίσκω, ζητέω: 1:37); cf. 9:30.

⁶³⁰ Cf. ἔξω ἐπ' ἐρήμοις τόποις ἦν (Mark 1:45).

⁶³¹ Rendering ἄνοια here (unique to Luke among NT Gospels) as 'fury' (NRSV; NASB; ESV), 'furious' (NIV; NJB), or 'madness' (KJV) is problematic considering typical usage (cf. Pro 22:15; Eccl 11:10; Wis 15:18; 19:3; 2 Macc 4:6; 14:5; 15:33; 3 Macc 3:16, 20; Sib. Or. 3:377; 8:17; Pr Man 1:9; Philo, *Leg.* 3.211; *Sobr.* 1.11; 2 Tim 3:9; possibly *P. Eger.* 2 fr. 2 recto 50-51 [Bell and Skeat 1935, 22]; see *LSJ*, s.v. "ἄνοια"; *BDAG*, s.v. "ἄνοια"). Likewise, commentators acknowledging an element of 'mindlessness' here still render ἄνοια in terms of 'anger'/'fury'/'rage' (e.g., Marshall 1978, 236; Green 1997, 257; Bovon 2002–2013, 1:205; Culy et al 2010, 189; Parsons 2015, 99). This is partly from recognising Plato's (*Tim.* 86B) differentiation of ἄνοια as either μανία or ἀμαθία/'ignorance' (*pace* Plummer [1922, 170] opting for the former). Nevertheless, elsewhere Luke uses μανία (Acts 26:24), ἄγνοια/'ignorance' (Acts 3:17, 17:30), and θυμός/'fury' (Luke 4:28).

⁶³² Jesus ἀνεχώρησεν from hostility in Synoptic parallels (Mark 3:6-7//Matt 12:14-15; cf. avoiding crowds: Mark 3:13 [ἀναβαίνει]; 6:46 [ἀπῆλθεν]; Matt 14:23 [ἀνέβη]), but no thoughts or emotions of conspiring antagonists are described.

⁶³³ Cf. Mark 6:31-34 (δεῦτε: 6:31; ἀπέρχομαι: 6:32; ὑπάγω: 6:33); Matthew's Jesus ἀνεχώρησεν after hearing about John's arrest and death (4:12; 14:13).

kill you!’ (13:31). Jesus replies that ‘it is necessary’ (δεῖ) for him ‘to proceed’ (πορεύεσθαι) to Jerusalem (13:33). Later, his disciples follow him when he goes out and proceeds (ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη) to the Mount of Olives (22:39)⁶³⁴ where he withdraws (ἀπεσπάσθη, 22:41) from them to pray (22:42).⁶³⁵ Instances of πορεύομαι join Jesus’ withdrawals with the journey motif. Withdrawing from hostility is a model for his disciples (cf. 9:5).⁶³⁶ Finally, the childhood story anticipates the Emmaus episode (24:13-35) with Jesus’ absence troubling his companions who also experience his withdrawing presence (relationally from earthly parents; visually from disciples).⁶³⁷

Jesus, like Wisdom, is found by those who genuinely seek him, but remains elusive to those who reject him. Withdrawing enables completion of his necessary journey, circumventing untimely suffering by avoiding undesirable attention.⁶³⁸ His mission requires his elusive presence. The withdrawal motif occurs already in Mark with other instances in the double material, though Jesus’ withdrawals in Luke are vital for his journey and contribute to an implicit Wisdom Christology, recalling his childhood which is likewise reminiscent of elusive Wisdom.

4.3. Synthesis and Observations

Luke’s Gospel opens with titles and descriptions concerning Jesus’ identity and future accomplishments casting him as an enigmatic figure with the childhood story showing his first actions and speech to be elusive. The childhood story illustrates Jesus’ superior wisdom on the cusp of adulthood, but considerable narrative space is devoted to his elusive conduct and others’ reactions to it, climaxing with his perplexing utterance alluding to his extraordinary intimacy with God. Jesus’ first action of deliberately remaining behind in Jerusalem and going to the temple on a divine journey has the effect of eluding his parents who expect him to remain in their company, but who must seek and find him. The child neither hides nor

⁶³⁴ Cf. Mark 14:26 (ἐξῆλθον). In the NT ἐξέρχομαι + πορεύομαι in proximity is typically Lukan (Acts 12:17; 16:36; 20:1; 21:5; cf. Matt 24:1).

⁶³⁵ In Matt 26:39 Jesus does not withdraw, but προελθὼν μικρόν before praying.

⁶³⁶ See Chapter 8.

⁶³⁷ Johnson 1991, 62.

⁶³⁸ Withdrawing to commune with God for empowerment (Green 1997, 362; Spencer 2008, 124) is not incompatible.

withdraws due to rejection, but takes actions that demonstrate his independence and elusiveness. His agonising parents finally locate him in the temple, witnessing his astonishing precocity amid the teachers. His mother responds with a distressed enquiry about his actions. His first speech is a corrective and esoteric response justifying his behaviour and inciting curiosity about his identity vis-à-vis his relation to God, causing incomprehension and pondering. Jesus is an elusive child.⁶³⁹ This beginning characterisation prepares the reader to encounter Jesus' elusive conduct as the narrative ensues and invites pondering about Christology. His separation and baffling question both begin and foreshadow his journey, withdrawals, perplexing behaviour, and avoidant dialogue. As we shall see, Luke-Acts continues to feature ancient Mediterranean elusiveness conventions for the reader's characterisation of Jesus.

Whereas scholars often fixate on child precocity, Luke's story emphasises the youth's journey of independence according to the divine plan, much like the *Telemacheia*. Aligned with the *Telemacheia*—a distinct and famous coming of age tradition of a youthful son acting independently with divine guidance—the youthful Jesus, the Son of God, appears exceptionally mature and supramundane. Luke's story may reflect influence of a myth common to the *Telemacheia* and Tobit, but elements such as separation without parental awareness or conversing with elders shared between the Lukan and Homeric stories are absent in the Tobias tradition. Nevertheless, attestation of the *Telemacheia* or a common myth already in Tobit enhances the probability of a shared convention in Luke. In terms of journeying independent youths, Telemachus is the archetype, but Jesus is the paragon.

Scholarly focus on Jesus' possession of wisdom in Luke's childhood story overshadows its representation of Jesus as Wisdom. Jesus is depicted as precocious and endowed with divine wisdom indicative of his royal-Davidic messiahship, though he is also characterised as Wisdom. The seeking-finding motif in an illustration of the divine child elusively withdrawing from his human parents to the Jerusalem temple due to divine obedience evokes the activities and characteristics of Wisdom. This prepares the reader to identify other Jesus-Wisdom associations as the narrative progresses.

⁶³⁹ Cf. Crump 1992, 97-98 (intentional and esoteric conduct).

Ultimately, we see how these readings of Jesus' elusiveness underscore Son of God, Wisdom, and divine visitor Christologies, indicating his exceptionally theomorphic identity already from infancy and childhood. Regarding Lukan composition, we see that the childhood episode contributes to an elusiveness theme beyond a secrecy/mystery of messiahship or suffering central to *Geheimnis*-theories and rhetorically keeps the reader engaged and intrigued. The reader will continue to build Jesus' character as a supramundane elusive figure as the Gospel progresses, particularly during his opening ministry at Nazareth, to which I now turn.

CHAPTER 5

ELUSIVENESS OF JESUS AT NAZARETH (LUKE 4:16-30)

5.1. Evaluating Scholarly Interpretations and Establishing Interpretive Limitations

In this chapter I assess readings of Luke's Nazareth pericope (Luke 4:16-30) in the light of ancient Mediterranean elusiveness, particularly attentive to Jesus' escape. I begin by explicating how the text's silence on the precise manner of escape forms a narrative gap that curtails critics' and the reader's plausible interpretations to a reflexive, physically present, and miraculous manoeuvre.⁶⁴⁰ I then offer some legitimate readings of the account. My proposed reading as a [virtual] theoxenic episode expands previous scholars' detections of thematic divine visitation content. My examination of Jesus' escape offers readings underrepresented or unexplored in scholarship. We shall see how the evasion suggests physical transience, Jewish divine hiddenness traditions, Wisdom traditions, Jewish punitive theophanic traversal, and supernatural control. This episode and my proposed readings of it perpetuate the reader's portraiture of an elusive Jesus who is exceptionally theomorphic and further contribute to an elusiveness theme.

5.1.1. The Rhetorical Effect of the Narrative Gap in Luke 4:30

The Nazareth pericope builds suspense, then climaxes with a narrative gap of Jesus' ambiguous escape (Luke 4:30).⁶⁴¹ The Nazarenes become 'filled with rage' (ἐπλήσθησαν... θυμοῦ, 4:28) hearing Jesus' exposition and their first emotive action is 'rising up' (ἀναστάντες, 4:29). The narrative quickly moves from an inner space of sanctuary (ἡ συναγωγή, 4:16) to an outer space of repudiation (ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, 4:29) as they forcefully expel (ἐκβάλλω + ἔξω) the protagonist.⁶⁴² No sympathisers accompany him. His antagonists, evidently in control, 'led him' (ἤγαγον αὐτόν)

⁶⁴⁰ See §1.1.2.ii (review).

⁶⁴¹ Cf. Longenecker 2012, 18-23.

⁶⁴² This emphatic construction conveys aggressive expulsion (Lev 14:40; 2 Chron 29:16; 1 En. 101:5; 3 Bar. 4:10; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.627; *J.W.* 5.110; Luke 13:28; 20:15//Mark 1:8//Matt 21:39; John 6:37; 9:34-35; 12:31; Acts 7:58; 9:40) compared to uncompounded βάλλω + ἔξω conveying disposal (Matt 5:13; 13:48; Luke 14:35; John 15:6; 1 John 4:18). The reader links similar expulsions (Stephen: Acts 7:58; Paul and Barnabas: 13:50; Paul: 14:19) (see Radl 1975, 82-100; 2003, 268-70; Neiryneck 1999, 374-75; Bovon 2002-2013, 156).

outward and upward towards a tapering space, ‘as far as a brow of the hill’ (ἕως ὀφρύος τοῦ ὄρους).⁶⁴³ Disclosure of their intention, namely ‘in order to throw him down from the heights’ (ὥστε κατακρημνίσαι αὐτόν), epitomises their hostility.⁶⁴⁴ Aggressiveness and swift movement from an unhostile environment to a perilous and ineluctable predicament accumulates suspense. Jesus is seemingly helpless, surrounded by aggressors and approaching a precipice to be hurled down.

At this moment, ‘but he’ (αὐτὸς δέ, 4:30) indicates a sudden reversal and hope for the protagonist. Jesus, the new grammatical and conceptual subject, moves away from the precipice to safety by ‘passing through the midst of them’ (διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν). Passing through them (not around or over) is apparently his only option due to inadequate space and lacking alternatives. Jesus himself somehow ‘was proceeding on’ (ἔπορεύετο) and went down to Capernaum (4:31).⁶⁴⁵ The exact manner of evasion is unspecified, shaping a narrative gap that invites the reader to fill it with suitable, extratextual-informed options. The reader cannot escape wonder and speculation inherent to gap-filling and elicited by this climactic aporia preceded by suspense.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ An incensed mob desiring execution on a cliff outside a city forshadows the crowd before Pilate and Jesus’ crucifixion (Luke 23:13-33) (Ernst 1933, 133-34; Kurz 1993, 20, 49).

⁶⁴⁴ Tossing from a cliff may have preceded stoning (Nolland 1989–1993, 1:201). Cf. Lev 24:10-23. Offenders in the Roman Republic were tossed from cliffs, particularly the Capitoline Hill’s Tarpeian rock (Bradley 2012, 107-111). Tossing from a cliff/rock is a punishment for impiety (sacred-property theft and/or blasphemy) at Delphi (Lucian, *Phal.* 6), exemplified by the fabulist Aesop’s sentence (ἀπὸ κρημοῦ βληθῆναι, *Vit. Aes.* 132 [W/G]; cf. Plutarch, *Sera* 12). Froelich and Phillips (2019) suggest Luke’s imitation of Aesop’s death (*Vit. Aes.* 130-42). However, descension from heights is broadly an ancient punishment (cf. *BDAG*, s.v. “κατακρημνίζω”) and is a miserable death in Luke-Acts (Luke: 4:9; 8:32-33; Acts: 1:18-19).

⁶⁴⁵ Porter (2005, 66-73) emphasises the middle sense of so-called ‘deponent’ verbs or middle-voice forms (subject-participated and subject-affected action). Irrespective of grammatical voice (restricted by other factors), πορεύω(-ομαι) normally conveys reflexive intransitive locomotion, including in Luke-Acts—notwithstanding passive ascension (πορευομένου: Acts 1:10; πορευόμενον: 1:11)—lending to semantic middle force in Luke 4:30; cf. active sense (Pindar, *Ol.* 1.77; Sophocles, *Phil.* 517; Eur., *Tro.* 1086) or passive sense (Sophocles, *Aj.* 1254; *Oed. col.* 846) (*LSJ*, s.v. “πορεύω”). In Luke 4:30, αὐτός is the expressed, emphatic subject of reflexive action (ἔπορεύετο), marks changed events, and shifts focus from the Nazarenes to Jesus (cf. Porter 2005, 295-96). On the integrity of middle verbs and challenges to ‘deponency’ see Taylor 2004; Pennington 2009; Aubrey 2016; summaries: Campbell 2015, 91-104; Harris 2019, 127-30.

⁶⁴⁶ The reader fills narrative ‘gaps’ and ‘blanks’ (variously defined by critics), the former essential for meaning (Iser 1971; 1978, 165-231; cf. Sternberg 1985, 235-63; Tannehill 1998, 268-70; §1.3.1), the latter important for imagination/visualisation (Kurz 1993, 31-36). Narrative suspense presupposes reader responses, often uncertainty and problem-solving, such as using stored information to generate possible escapes of endangered characters (Gerrig 1993; cf. Allbritton and Gerrig 1991, 603-626). Suspense/surprise can be preserved in re-reading (Gerrig 1993, 79-80; Perry 1979, 256-57; cf. Barthes 2002, 15-16).

Rhetorical narrative silences or under-narration prompt reader responses and provoke emotive or cognitive reactions (e.g., mystification/confusion).⁶⁴⁷ Narrative gaps invite imaginative readings, but not in a vacuum. Herman remarks,

...theorists have explored how experiential repertoires, stored in the form of scripts, enable readers or listeners of stories to “fill in the blanks” and assume that if a narrator mentions a masked character running out of a bank with a satchel of money, then that character has in all likelihood robbed the bank in question.⁶⁴⁸

Having reconstructed an extratextual repertoire of elusiveness, we are better equipped to understand associations which Luke’s reader made.

The text sets interpretive contours, as Sternberg observes,

...literature is remarkable for its powers of control and validation. Of course, gap-filling may nevertheless be performed in a wild or misguided or tendentious fashion, and there is no lack of evidence for this in criticism ancient and modern. But to gain cogency, a hypothesis must be legitimated by the text.

Illegitimate gap-filling is one launched and sustained by the reader’s subjective concerns (or dictated by more general preconceptions) rather than by the text’s own norms and directives.⁶⁴⁹

Ruling out or opting for interpretations of a narrative gap designed to incite conjecture may seem counterintuitive. However, since the text demands limitations, numerous ancient and modern solutions for Luke 4:30 are tenuous or illegitimate. The increasingly informed reader might differently fill a gap after retrospection or re-reading.⁶⁵⁰ Longenecker says that proposals “...need also to be critiqued by the narrative’s own literary and theological configuration, which itself guides the audience in terms of knowing ‘what to look for’ and ‘how to look for it.’”⁶⁵¹ Consequently, before considering suitable, extratextual-informed readings of Jesus’

⁶⁴⁷ Booth 1983, 271-309; Maxwell 2010; Dinkler 2013, 25-28.

⁶⁴⁸ Herman 2009, 34; cf. 2002, *passim*.

⁶⁴⁹ Sternberg 1985, 188, cf. 189.

⁶⁵⁰ Iser 1974, 280-83; cf. Sternberg 1985, 264-320; 2001.

⁶⁵¹ Longenecker 2012, 38-39.

elusiveness at Nazareth, attending to contextual and co-textual details can narrow or legitimate critics' proposals. I now turn to examine how such particularities require Jesus' reflexive agency and physical presence of his miraculous evasion.

5.1.2. Scholarly Interpretations of Luke 4:30 Undervalue Lukan Expression of Jesus' Reflexive, Physically Present, and Miraculous Manoeuvre

The narrative restricts interpretations of Jesus' evasion to those accounting for his reflexive agency. As shown above, Jesus (αὐτός) is the subject of unlikely escape who ἐπορεύετο (Luke 4:30). Πορεύομαι and διέρχομαι here are *Reisenotizen*, customarily expressing Jesus' indomitable journey to Jerusalem where he must die (cf. 2:41; 4:42; 7:6, 11; 9:51-57; 13:33; 17:11; 22:22, 39; 24:28).⁶⁵² Journeying to Jerusalem is Jesus' own feat, including passing through the Nazarenes and proceeding from Nazareth. This is significant for Luke's theme of God visiting his people through Jesus. We shall see how the reader recognises Jesus' Nazareth visit not only as programmatic for this theme (so Denaux; Byrne; Jipp),⁶⁵³ but also as a [virtual] theoxenic episode.

The reader, cognisant of the Spirit's activity with Jesus' conception (Luke 1:32-35) and presence with Jesus at baptism (3:22), in the wilderness (4:1),⁶⁵⁴ in Galilee (4:14), and at Nazareth (4:18 quoting Isa 61:1a), might infer passive deliverance by the Spirit's agency in Luke 4:30. However, pneumatic and angelic transportations facilitate relocations and visionary experiences without rescue from danger.⁶⁵⁵ Jesus routinely works by divine pneumatic empowerment (Acts 1:2; 2:22,

⁶⁵² The rhetorical device of adjunction/*adiunctio* (Rhet. Her. 4.27.37 [see Parsons 2008, 84, 188]), with the verb (ἐπορεύετο) at the end of the clause, highlights journeying. On πορεύομαι and the journey motif see Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:164-71, 539, 2:1557-58, 1567-68; Longenecker 2012, 50-55; cf. Levinsohn 2001. On the *Reisenotiz* διέρχομαι (cf. 13:22 [διαπορεύομαι]; 17:11 [διέρχομαι + πορεύομαι]) see Prevallet 1968; Miyoshi 1974, 18, 84, 87-88; Baban (2006, 211) includes ἔρχομαι and compound forms (e.g., διέρχομαι: Acts 8:40; 9:42); also Luke 19:4 (διέρχασθαι). Cosgrove (1984, 179-83) understands Jesus at Nazareth executing divine necessity, deterring untimely suffering in control of his passion.

⁶⁵³ See §1.1.1.iii.

⁶⁵⁴ The Spirit guides Jesus to the wilderness in Luke and Matthew (ἀνήχθη/'led up': Matt 4:1), unlike the more passive Markan Jesus whom the Spirit ἐκβάλλει/'casts out' (Mark 1:12); cf. Rev 17:3a.

⁶⁵⁵ Spirit: Ezek 3:12, 14; 8:1-3; 11:1, 24; 43:5; cf. 2:2; 37:1; Apoc. Zeph. 1:1; angels: Bel 36; cf. Ezek 8:3; 1 En. 14:25; 87:3; 90:31; 2 Enoch [passim]; Odes Sol. 36:1-2; 2 Bar. 6:3; Apoc. Mos. 37:3; As. Mos.; nebular vehicle: T. Ab. [B] 8:3; [E] [B] 10:2/[A] 10:1; 12:1). On Acts 8:39-40 see §8.1.4.

33), beginning in Galilee (10:38).⁶⁵⁶ Reading God's pneumatic presence in Jesus who departs Nazareth upon experiencing rejection comports with divine hiddenness and elusive Wisdom traditions. Jesus' self-deliverance through pneumatic empowerment preserves the integrity of his volition and agency.

Angels aid mortals and ensure success,⁶⁵⁷ including raising a psalmist to prevent him from dashing his foot upon a stone (Ps 90:11-12/91:11-12 HB). Some scholars see Jesus' Nazareth escape recalling the devil tempting Jesus to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple (Luke 4:9-12), quoting Ps 90:11-12 to imply unharmed angelic deliverance.⁶⁵⁸ This reading is strengthened by the adjacent pericopae, Jesus' appeal to scripture during his temptations (Luke 4:4, 8, 12) and at Nazareth (4:17-19, 25-27),⁶⁵⁹ the shared phrase ἤγαγον αὐτόν, and conceptual links such as υἱὸς... τοῦ θεοῦ and βάλε... κάτω (4:9) with υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ (4:22) and κατακρημνίσαι (4:30). Longenecker finds this reading congruous with 'divine involvement and causality' such as Jesus' resurrection (deliverance from death), the journey motif and necessity of Jesus' mission, and 'escape'/'rescue' in Acts, namely prison-escapes (5:17-24; 12:6-11; 16:25-26), Paul's survivals from stoning (14:19-20) and snakebite (28:1-6), and Philip's relocation (8:39-40).⁶⁶⁰ However, details in Luke 4:28-30 problematise reading angelic deliverance. Jesus escapes before being hurled from the precipice. Intertextuality of Ps 90:12 (Luke 4:11) requires conceptualised descent for angels to take up (ἀροῦσίν) the figure. Yet, Jesus is not taken up, but passes through. Furthermore, the devil tells Jesus to throw himself (βάλε σεαυτόν, 4:9), implying reflexive agency, whereas at Nazareth Jesus is almost passively cast down. Although the devil 'led' (ἤγαγεν) Jesus to Jerusalem and 'stood him upon' (ἔστησεν ἐπὶ) the temple, implying Jesus' passivity, the devil departs (4:13) and Jesus 'returned' (ὑπέστρεψεν) to Galilee 'in the power of the Spirit' (ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος, 4:14). Additional to expressing Jesus' pneumatically empowered ministry (paralleling 4:1), τῇ δυνάμει hints at a supernatural return given δύναμις typically

⁶⁵⁶ A model for his disciples (Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:62-63). Jesus refuses to exploit supernatural control or succumb to temptation already prior (Luke 4:1-13).

⁶⁵⁷ See §3.1.4.

⁶⁵⁸ See n. 72.

⁶⁵⁹ Longenecker 2012, 84-85.

⁶⁶⁰ Longenecker 2012, 38-60, 84-111. Longenecker's (2012, chs. 4-5, 7) assessment is mostly intratextual (notwithstanding Ps 90/91 HB).

conveying miraculous activity or supramundane quality in Luke-Acts and a Spirit-δύναμις association (Luke 1:35 [cf. 1:17]; Acts 1:8 [cf. Luke 24:49]; 10:38). Jesus likely teleports, just as he was supernaturally taken to the temple. Angels do not aid him like in Synoptic parallels (Mark 1:13//Matt 4:11).⁶⁶¹ Readings of Jesus' passive deliverance at Nazareth, including by God or angels (so Wolter, Ellis, MacDonald, and Longenecker),⁶⁶² require supplemental characters absent in the immediate narrative.

The escape narrative limits interpretations to miraculous phenomena. Scholars determining that διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν (Luke 4:30) does not indicate a miracle offer no satisfactory explanation for its inclusion considering similar phrases.⁶⁶³ It could describe Jesus' departure through geographical Nazareth, similar to Samaria and Galilee (... ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι... αὐτὸς διήρχετο διὰ μέσον Σαμαρείας καὶ Γαλιλαίας, 17:11).⁶⁶⁴ However, Jesus passes through αὐτῶν (4:30), namely irate Nazarenes (πάντες... ἀκούοντες, 4:28; ἐξέβαλον; ἤγαγον, 4:29), not only Nazareth.⁶⁶⁵ Luke usually applies μέσος to mean either 'middle' (Luke 4:35; 5:19; 6:8; 21:21; 22:55; Acts 4:7; 17:22; adjectival uses/forms: Luke 23:45; Acts 1:18; 16:25; 26:13; 27:27) or 'among' (Luke 2:46; 10:3; 22:27, 55; 24:36; Acts 1:15; 2:22; 17:33; 23:10; 27:21) and for people rather than regions (notwithstanding Luke 17:11; 21:21).⁶⁶⁶ Inclusion of διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν (Luke 4:30) designates *what* Jesus passes through (the horde) and intensifies wonder about *how* he does this without recourse as the multitude drives him towards the precipice. His manoeuvre διὰ them, as opposed to another direction (e.g., περί, ἐπί, ὑπέρ, ἐπάνω, or παρά), is enhanced by μέσου αὐτῶν.

⁶⁶¹ Longenecker's (2012, 85-94) suggestion that these fulfil Ps 90/91 HB faces issues, including that Jesus is neither cast down nor borne up. Longenecker (2012, 89-90) critiques Augustine's (*Psalms* 91.16) application of this Psalm to Jesus' ascension since it lacks deliverance and involves nebular agency (despite angels in Acts 1:10-11), but Jesus' Nazareth escape also differs, lacking bearing-up and angels. Christological fulfilment of other Psalms does not necessitate it for this Psalm (*pace* Longenecker 2012, 94-105)—Jesus avoids testing God (Luke 4:12).

⁶⁶² See §1.1.2.ii.

⁶⁶³ E.g.: Culy et al 2010, 141-42; followed by Longenecker 2012, 43; cf. Plummer 1922, 129-30 (indicates a miracle).

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. Luke 21:21; Jer 37:4. Διέρχεσθαι is typically Lukan (31/43 NT uses) and redactional (Wolter 2016, 1:129, cf. 1:209).

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Acts 9:32.

⁶⁶⁶ Διὰ + accusative typically means 'on account of'/'because of', but διὰ μέσον in Luke 17:11 means 'among' Samaria then Galilee (or reverse) or 'through the middle/centre of'/'between' these regions (*BDAG*, s.v. "μέσος"); cf. διέρχομαι with πορεύομαι omitting μέσος for Paul journeying through Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 19:21).

Rather than escaping immediately after expulsion from the synagogue or whilst led towards the crag, Jesus waits ἕως ὀφρύος τοῦ ὄρου (4:29). These niceties express a superfluity of Jesus' elusiveness. Casting out and leading Jesus imply aggressive physical contact further depicting a dire and inescapable situation. Schürmann understands such violence to preclude interpretations of a sly or cunning escape.⁶⁶⁷ Nothing but a bellicose throng and a bluff surround Jesus. His escape against all odds through the midst of the crowd undoubtedly entails a miracle.⁶⁶⁸ Construing a non-miraculous escape does not do justice to the narrative peculiarities and artistry, is unremarkable (vitiating suspense and wonder), and improbable given nowhere to flee whilst an incensed mob fixates on their target. A miraculous evasion is itself programmatic for Jesus' miracle-filled ministry.⁶⁶⁹

Foster acknowledges that early scribes interpreted a miracle in Luke 4:30 (though uncertain himself) who incorporated its verbiage into John 8:59 when docetic and proto-orthodox authors popularly adopted polymorphic Christology (incipient in the NT).⁶⁷⁰ Unlike evident depictions of Jesus' pre-mortem polymorphism (Gos. Jud. 33.15-20; Gos. Phil. 57:28-58:10; 68:26-29; Acts John 88:9-20; 89:1-15; 90.1-22; 91; 92:1-8; 93:1-4, 11-13; Acts Pet. 5; 20; 21; Acts Thom. 48; 153),⁶⁷¹ interpreting NT evasions as polymorphous or even invisibility or impalpability entails conjecture, but remain plausible. Such readings of Luke 4:30 are lacking among scholars

⁶⁶⁷ Schürmann 1969, 1:240.

⁶⁶⁸ More miraculous than healings for Loisy 1924, 163-64.

⁶⁶⁹ Luke's omission of ἀπιστία disallowing Jesus to perform δῶναμις (Mark 6:5-6, cf. 7, 13) or δυνάμεις πολλάς (Matthew 13:58)—that is, healings/exorcisms—in Synoptic parallels does not warrant denying a miracle in his exclusive escape account.

⁶⁷⁰ Foster 2007, 75-77; see §1.2. *P. Eger. 2 fr.* 1 recto 24-31 combines Johannine verbiage (John 7:30; 8:20, 59; 10:31, 39) for Jesus escaping stoning. Bell and Skeat (1935, 10-11, cf. 19) reconstruct lines 30-31 with Luke 4:30 content (parentheses expand nomina sacra; brackets indicate lacunae; my line break): αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κ(ύριος) ἐξελθὼν [διὰ μέσου αὐ]τῶν ἀπένευσεν ἀπ' [αὐτῶν]. Notwithstanding αὐτὸς δέ... -τῶν, Lukan verbiage is absent. Moreover, line 30 has insufficient space for ten letters (διὰ μέσου αὐ-), compared with lines, allowing four or five letters. Watson's (2013, 316) suggestion (ἐκ) τῆς χειρός αὐ- (cf. John 10:39) requires eleven to thirteen letters. Alternatively, διὰ αὐ- (omitting μέσου) is plausible.

⁶⁷¹ See Foster 2007, 77-98. Although these are not evasions, some are transfigurations. Moreover, these texts retroject NT post-resurrection qualities into Jesus' pre-mortem life, e.g., (dis)appearing (Gos. Jud. 33:18-21; 36:9-17; 37:21-22; 44:13-14) and ascending into a luminous cloud (57:21-58:6; cf. 47:14-26).

acknowledging a miracle or are subsumed under dismissed miraculous explanations,⁶⁷² despite being unopposed to the context and diction.

What ancient traditions might διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν evoke? Klostermann likens it to the Hermetic magico-medical *Cyranides* 2.11 (ca. fourth century CE),⁶⁷³ a late prescription actually implying invisibility (2.11.3: φεύξεται ἀνὰ μέσον ἀντιπάλων, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτὸν ὄψεται; ‘he will flee up the midst of antagonists and no one will see him’).⁶⁷⁴ Busse parallels an (alleged) escape of Diogenes (Dio Chrysostom, *Tyr.* [Or. 6] 60),⁶⁷⁵ but Diogenes is not saying that he manoeuvres unscathed through hostility; rather, his insouciant outlook enables unconcern about harm in adverse circumstances, including amid an army without a caduceus or among thieves (...καὶ διὰ στρατοπέδου πορευόμενος ἄνευ κηρυκείου καὶ διὰ ληστῶν). We saw in the extratext that the Israelites famously ἐπορεύθησαν διὰ ξηρᾶς ἐν μέσῳ τῆς θαλάσσης, escaping the Egyptians (Exod 14:29; cf. 15:19; Ps 136:13-14).⁶⁷⁶ Before arriving at Nazareth, Jesus is tested in the wilderness for forty days resembling Israel’s forty years in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13; cf. Exod 16:35; Num 14:33-34; 32:13; Deut 2:7; 8:2, 4; 29:5). Interpretive issues emerge from reading an exodus allusion at Nazareth. Whereas Jesus escapes through the midst of antagonists, Israel escapes through the midst of the sea from antagonists. Jesus and the Nazarenes become typologies for Israel and the Egyptians (respectively), but the Nazarenes actually represent Israel. I propose below that Jesus’ departure elicits other Jewish ‘passing through/by’ traditions, particularly punitive theophanic traversal.

The narrative also requires Jesus’ physically present evasion. Baarda reconstructs the primitive rendition of Luke 4:30 in the *Diatessaron* from Aphrahat’s *Demonstration on Love* and Ephraem’s commentary, showing that Tatian either misread ἐπορεύετο or possessed an exemplar with a form of [περι]πέτομαι, thus recording that Jesus is thrown down, but safely flies away.⁶⁷⁷ However, διελθὼν διὰ

⁶⁷² Dismissing a miracle: van Oosterzee 1868, 74-75; Meyer 1884, 313; Godet 1890, 1:240; Caird 1985, 87; Morris 2008, 128; Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:529, 538-39; Bovon 2002–2013, 1:156-57 n. 43.

⁶⁷³ Klostermann 1929, 65.

⁶⁷⁴ Ruelle 1989, 66 (Greek); a variant of MS R (*fr.* 80 line 5) has διελύσεται instead of φεύξεται (=2.23.5 [Kaimakis 1976, 152], cf. 2.23.22-24).

⁶⁷⁵ Busse 1978, 46.

⁶⁷⁶ Cf. Neh 9:11 (παρέρχομαι + μέσος).

⁶⁷⁷ Baarda 1986, 335; cf. *Diatessaron* 17:51-52.

μέσου αὐτῶν requires Jesus' terrestrial locomotion and physical presence, manoeuvring through the crowd. Therefore, he does not leap over them like gods over walls (Eur., *Bacch.* 653-54), fly away like Homeric deities (Hom., *Od.* 1.96-98, 102-104, 319-324, 410-411; 5.43-54; 7.78-79), or disappear like Apollonius (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5; as Creed, Smith, and Johnson suggest).⁶⁷⁸ Disappearance traditions are more comparable to his Emmaus vanishing (Luke 24:31b).⁶⁷⁹

Several (mostly nineteenth-century) scholars posit that Jesus naturally influences his aggressors,⁶⁸⁰ but commentators willing to conceive supernatural control suggest that Jesus stills or restrains the mob, walking away through their midst.⁶⁸¹ Supernatural control analogues offer precedents for imagining Jesus controlling his would-be executioners to pass unrestrained through their midst. Whatever interpretations the reader supplies, the aporetic narrative of Luke 4:30 best suits a reflexive, physically present, and miraculous phenomenon.⁶⁸²

5.2. Readings of Ancient Mediterranean Elusiveness in the Lukan Nazareth Pericope

5.2.1. Recognising Jesus' Nazareth Visit as a Visitation and (In)hospitality Scene

Luke's reader recognises the Nazareth account as a [virtual] theoxenic episode (§§2.1.1; 3.1.1). This reading of Luke's programmatic pericope highlights theomorphic Christologies of Jesus as a divine visitor (specifically the visiting Son of God) and judge. Additional to its significance for the divine visitation theme, this reading illuminates the episode's paradigmatic function for Lukan [virtual] theoxenic scenes.

⁶⁷⁸ Creed 1957, 69; Smith 1978, 120-21, 200; Johnson 1991, 80.

⁶⁷⁹ See §6.2.3.

⁶⁸⁰ E.g., with variation: Godet, Caird, Morris, and Fitzmyer (§1.1.2.ii).

⁶⁸¹ Barnes 1857, 2:51 (word or look through divine power); van Doren 1881, 1:120 (supernatural look); Meyer 1884, 313 (miraculous restraint); cf. Edwards 2015, 142 (superhuman courage). Already, Ambrose speaks of their altered or stupefied minds (*Luc.* 4.56) and elsewhere says that antagonists could not seize Jesus despite seeing him (*Aux.* 14 [verbiage from Luke 4:30; John 7:30]).

⁶⁸² Origen speaks of Jesus' escape as superhuman (*Comm. in Matt.* ser. 99 lines 13-14). Gregory of Nazianzus comments that Jesus only willingly suffers (*Orat.* 31.1), and encourages his audience not to resist stoning, since, like God, they will escape through their assailants' midst (φεύξει καὶ διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν, ὡς Θεός; *Orat.* 38.18 [Migne, *PG* 36:332]). Cyril of Alexandria (*Comm. Luke*, ser. 12) and Bede (*In Luc.* 2.361-63) also see Jesus' evasion evincing sovereignty over his suffering.

The visitor arrives. After traversing Galilean territory, Jesus begins his ministry visiting his ‘hometown’ (πατρίς, 4:23-24; cf. 4:16)⁶⁸³ Nazareth where his townsfolk will show hospitality, but subsequently reject him, supposing he is merely a son of Joseph, not of God. Graeco-Roman deities visit places where they are venerated (cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 33.47) or born, particularly the Euripidean Dionysus who returns to his birthplace Thebes, his mother’s hometown (cf. Eur., *Bacch.* 13-42).⁶⁸⁴ Jesus wandering around Galilee, ‘teaching in their synagogues’ (ἐδίδασκεν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν), being praised by everyone, prefaces Luke’s account (Luke 4:15). Jesus arrives in Nazareth and ‘entered’ (εἰσῆλθεν, 4:16) the synagogue on the Sabbath according to his custom. ‘Entering’ (e.g., εἰσέρχομαι) is typical of visitation scenes (Gen 19:3, 8; 1 Kgs 17:18; 2 Kgs 4:11, 32; Tob 5:10; T. Ab. [E] [B] 2:7; 13:6; Luke 1:40; 4:38; 7:36, 44-45; 8:41, 51; 9:4; 10:5, 38; 11:37; 24:9; Acts 16:15, 40; 18:7; 21:8; 28:8; cf. Luke 7:6; Ovid, *Metam.* 8.639 [*intro*]),⁶⁸⁵ including with synagogue type-scenes (Luke 6:6; Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:2; 18:19; 19:8). For Luke, at least some synagogues are structures (Luke 7:5; Acts 18:7).

The hosts treat their guest hospitably, creating a positive episode. Although Jesus is ‘where he was brought up’ (οὗ ἦν τεθραμμένος, Luke 4:16), the Nazarenes receive him as a visitor and give him the honour of reading and teaching (4:16-17). He is seated since ‘he stood’ (ἤνέστη, 4:16) to read and afterwards ‘sat down’ (ἐκάθισεν, 4:20).⁶⁸⁶ Guests are offered [superior] seats in Homeric hospitality scenes (Hom., *Od.* 1.130-32, 145; 3.35-39; 4:51; 7.169-71; 14.49).⁶⁸⁷ Jesus ‘was given’ (ἐπεδόθη) an Isaiah scroll (Luke 4:17), then returns it to the assistant (ἀποδοὺς τῷ ὑπηρέτῃ, 4:20) after reading. His hosts are impressed and testify favourably about him (πάντες ἐμαρτύρουν αὐτῷ, 4:22). The narrative omits the service’s beginning with a probable Torah reading and blessings, but Luke’s literary and theological

⁶⁸³ Πατρίς evokes Israel and Jerusalem (Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:71; Nolland 1989–1993, 1:200), as in Lev 25:10 which speaks of the Jubilee alluded to in Isa 61:2a (quoted in Luke 4:19).

⁶⁸⁴ See §§2.1.1.ii; 2.1.1.iii.

⁶⁸⁵ See Reece 1993, 20-21 (Homeric).

⁶⁸⁶ Cf. T. Ab. [B] [E] 2:5. Paul and others ‘entered’ the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch and ‘sat down’ (Acts 13:14). They are invited to speak (13:15), so Paul ‘stood up’ (13:16). That Jews typically stood to read or sat to teach is inevident.

⁶⁸⁷ Reece 1993, 21-22.

purposes make otiose historical exactitude.⁶⁸⁸ Apparent first-century CE synagogue customs and Jesus' hermeneutical reading⁶⁸⁹ do not detract from a [virtual] theoxeny.

The enigmatic visitor reveals his identity which the hosts ponder. Taking advantage of his role, Jesus 'finds', quotes, and applies Isa 61:1-2a, 58:6 to himself, claiming scriptural fulfilment (Luke 4:17-21).⁶⁹⁰ He reveals himself as the one anointed by the Lord's Spirit (πνεῦμα κυρίου, 4:18), sent to proclaim good news, and the herald of the year of the Lord's 'favour'/'welcome' (δεκτόν, 4:19).⁶⁹¹ Thus, Jesus reveals himself as God's visitor already at Nazareth. The Nazarenes marvel (πάντες ἐμαρτύρουν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐθαύμαζον) and exclaim, 'is this not a son of Joseph?' (οὐχὶ υἱὸς ἐστὶν Ἰωσήφ οὗτος, 4:22).⁶⁹² Christological pondering is focalised through the tertiary characters' response for reader emulation.⁶⁹³ Questioning familial lineage is a common theoxenic feature (e.g., Hom., *Od.* 1.170, 407; 4.60-65 [cf. 4.100-112, 143-45]; 8.550-86; 9.263-64, 366-67; 14.187; 19.105; Tob 5:11-14; T. Ab. [A] 2:5-6).⁶⁹⁴ Emphasis on Dionysus' unrecognition among relatives pervades Euripides' *Bacchae*. Amazement at Jesus' 'words of grace' (τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος, Luke 2:22)⁶⁹⁵ and

⁶⁸⁸ Radl 2003, 253-54.

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. Klein 2006, 187-88; Notley 2009; Levine and Witherington 2018, 113-15.

⁶⁹⁰ Similarly, Grundmann 1966, 120 (initiative as Lord); Morris 2008, 126; *pace* Klein 2006, 189 (Jesus discovers God's planned passages). A chiasmus (4:16b-20) centres the Isaiah reading (4:18-19) (Dupont 1978, 130; Green 1997, 209).

⁶⁹¹ Jipp 2013, 223 (revealing God's 'welcome'). The Jubilee/year of release (Lev 25:10, 13; cf. Deut 15:2; Isa 52:7; Pss 7:8-9; 82:1-2) alluded to in Isa 61:1-3 (and 58:6) creates a theme adapted by Luke and 11QMelch (see van der Woude 1965; de Jonge and van der Woude 1966; Miller 1969; Fitzmyer 1967). The Qumran Melchizedek is a chief heavenly messianic figure with roles predicated of God (García Martínez 1996, 22-24; cf. Rainbow 1997) or a preeminent angelic guardian subordinate to Yahweh (Walsh 2020, 162-72; cf. Hurtado 2010, 552-56). Jesus' proclamation and self-arrogation of the herald's role (Melchizedek at Qumran) would delight and puzzle his townsfolk (Sanders 2001, 58, cf. 57-69). Recalling Isaiah's context of Israel awaiting exilic deliverance, they would hope for liberation from Gentile subjugation, but be perturbed by omitted vengeance (Isa 61:2b) if anticipating a visiting agent of divine judgment at an eschatological Jubilee (11QMelch; 1QS 9:21-23; 10:17-21; 1QM 7:3-7) (so Ford 2010, 53-64).

⁶⁹² Marvelling confirms the 'report' (φήμη, 4:14), not indicating hostility (with Nolland 1979; Sanders 2001, 58, 61; contra Violet 1938; Jeremias 1958, 44-46; Ó Fearghail 1984).

⁶⁹³ See Loney 2005, 26-27; cf. Rabinowitz 1987, 55; Darr 1992, 62. Flender's (1967, 152-57) exegesis of this pericope centres on the reader's amazement and curiosity, thereby challenging them (like the narrative audience) concerning faith—a rhetoric characterising Luke-Acts.

⁶⁹⁴ Cf. T. Ab. [B] [E] 2:7-10 (Michael questioning Abraham).

⁶⁹⁵ Nolland (1984; 1989-1993, 1:198-99) suggests impactful divine χάρις in Jesus' words (cf. 2:40). They perceive graciousness more than the content (Wolter 2016, 1:204). Cf. Jdt 11:20-21; Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 4.31.

questioning his paternal sonship recall the childhood story⁶⁹⁶ with his divinely ordained temple visitation and juxtaposition of Joseph and God (4:48-49; cf. ὄν υἱός, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, Ἰωσήφ, 3:23). Although Jesus is not disguised, his compatriots struggle to recognise him as a prophet, an agent of salvation, and the Son of God (cf. 1:31-32, 35; 3:22; 4:3, 9).⁶⁹⁷ Their question exposes misunderstanding, albeit more incomprehension and pondering (cf. 2:50, 51b) than supernatural restraint (cf. 9:45; 18:34). Reece writes (on Homeric scenes), “The revelation of a guest’s identity is perhaps the most critical element in the development of a relationship of *xenia*, for it is the vital link that guarantees the host reciprocal hospitality as a guest in the future”.⁶⁹⁸ Aspects of Jesus’ identity are veiled, evident by their necessary revelation.

The hosts treat their guest inhospitably, creating a negative episode. Jesus, assuming a didactic role,⁶⁹⁹ offers an unexpected exposition and directly accuses the Nazarenes of rejecting him as a wonder-working prophet in his hometown. He alludes to Elijah sent to the widow in Zarephath of Sidon despite widows in Israel and Elisha sent to Naaman the Syrian despite lepers in Israel (Luke 4:25-27; cf. 1 Kgs 17:8-24; 2 Kgs 5:1-27).⁷⁰⁰ Hospitality towards Elijah outside Israel contrasts with Nazarene inhospitality.⁷⁰¹ Jesus’ scriptural reading and assertions fashion an opportunity for either blessing or detriment, respectively dependent on either acceptance or rejection of him and his message. Denaux observes blessings or salvation for genuine hospitality towards Jesus (Luke 7:36-50; 10:38-41; 19:1-10; 24:28-32) and judgment for inhospitality (19:27, 44).⁷⁰² James and John request that fire from heaven

⁶⁹⁶ The reader recognises Jesus as the Spirit-filled Son of God and Messiah (4:18-21; cf. 1:31-35; 3:23, 38), as do superhuman witnesses (4:34, 41), unlike misunderstanding townsfolk (4:22) (Kurz 1993, 150).

⁶⁹⁷ Similarly, the Maltese see undisguised Paul as a prisoner, thus hiding and obscuring his identity as God’s salvific agent in the theoxenic Malta episode (Acts 28:1-10) (Jipp 2013, 260). God visits through undisguised prophets Elijah and Elisha (§3.1.1). Jesus is a prophet like Moses and Elijah (Daniélou 1950, 157-81; Mánek 1957; Hastings 1958, 50-75; Minear 1976, 81-121; O’Toole 1990; 2008, 29-42; Croatto 2005; Poirier 2009 [Elijianic figure at Nazareth]) with accounts modelled after Elijah/Elisha narratives (see Brown 1971; Brodie 1981; 1983; 1986a; 1989; 1992; 2000; contributions in Kloppenborg and Verheyden 2014).

⁶⁹⁸ Reece 1993, 25.

⁶⁹⁹ Green 1997, 205.

⁷⁰⁰ These recall Elisha’s Shunem visitation (2 Kgs 4:8-37).

⁷⁰¹ These Elijah/Elisha allusions (with others: 7:11-17; 9:52-55, 61-62) challenge first-century Jewish election concepts by Gentile inclusion, developing election ethics for the central section (9:51-18:14) (Evans 2001). Crockett (1969) sees foreshadowed Jewish-Gentile reconciliation in Jesus.

⁷⁰² Denaux 1999, 261.

consume inhospitable Samaritans (alluding to inhospitality at Sodom: Gen 19:24-25), but Jesus rebukes them (Luke 9:51-56; cf. Samaritans welcoming Jesus: John 4:1-45).⁷⁰³ Judgment is received when ‘they proceeded (ἐπορεύθησαν) to another village’ (Luke 9:56). Jesus later instructs his disciples to bless houses with peace for hospitality, but to curse towns and depart when rejected (10:5-12). Divine visitation is beneficial or detrimental in Luke-Acts (ἐπισκέπτομαι/ἐπισκοπή: 1:68, 78; 7:16; 19:44; Acts 15:14),⁷⁰⁴ like in ancient Mediterranean traditions. Had Jesus not upset his Nazarene hosts, he might have been offered an overnight stay common for travelling guests.⁷⁰⁵ He would likely sojourn with family, yet elsewhere he claims to have nowhere to lay his head (9:58).⁷⁰⁶ The Nazarenes’ cordiality turns to rejection, ill-treatment, and attempted murder (4:28-29), severely violating ancient Mediterranean hospitality customs. Contrastive with Homeric scenes where visitors are bidden to stay and escorted, Jesus is expelled and led to near execution (4:29).

The visit concludes with a phenomenal departure and retribution. Jesus phenomenally departs through the midst of the Nazarenes, proceeding onward to benefit others (4:30). Jesus’ departure conveys his non-bestowal of anticipated entitled blessings to the Nazarenes as the reader actualises his aphorism (4:23).⁷⁰⁷ Phenomenal departures concluding visitations imply divine epiphanies (e.g., [angel of] Yahweh; Raphael; Michael; Athene; Dionysus; Apollos).⁷⁰⁸ His departure forms an *inclusio* with his arrival (Luke 4:16).⁷⁰⁹ Jesus performs few miracles at Nazareth due to unbelief in other Synoptics (Mark 6:5-6//Matt 13:58), and in Luke he alludes to miracles (4:18), then miraculously departs in a display of power due to unbelief and hostility (4:28-30).⁷¹⁰ Jesus abandoning the Nazarenes is *ipso facto* retribution for inhospitality. Neither Jesus nor the gospel returns.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰³ Arterbury 2005, 141.

⁷⁰⁴ See §3.1.1.

⁷⁰⁵ Additional to hosting peripatetic teachers in homes, first-century synagogues may have allowed spaces for overnight guests (Koenig 1985, 16-17; Arterbury 2005, 58).

⁷⁰⁶ Paul is hosted as a guest whilst visiting synagogues (Acts 17:7; 18:1-3, 7).

⁷⁰⁷ Spencer 2007a, 69-70.

⁷⁰⁸ See §§2.1.1; 2.1.3; 3.1.1; 3.1.3.

⁷⁰⁹ Combrink 1973, 329-30; Green 1997, 208.

⁷¹⁰ See n. 669.

⁷¹¹ Similarly, Ernst 1993, 134.

Although absent food or other elements do not disqualify episodes as theoxenic, especially negative scenes, food and drink in first-century synagogues may be assumed.⁷¹² The rabbinic prohibition in t. Megillah 2.18 against, *inter alia*, eating and drinking in the synagogue evinces practices the rabbis sought to reform.⁷¹³ Synagogues were locations for festive meals (y. Mo‘ed Qat. 2.3, 81b; y. Sanh. 8.2, 26a-b) where guests ate and drank (b. Pesah. 100b-101a), including rabbis or sages in the upper chamber (y. Ber. 2.8, 5d), priests (y. Ber. 3.1, 6a; y. Naz. 7.1, 56a), and servants or fishermen (Gen. Rab. 65.15), sometimes before a fast (Lam. Rab., Proem 17).⁷¹⁴ Searching for leaven in synagogues before Passover (y. Pesah. 1.1, 27b) suggests food present.⁷¹⁵ Secondary or attached rooms to synagogues were probably used for various activities, including hosting guests.⁷¹⁶ Furthermore, Jesus’ Elijah allusion (Luke 4:26) emphasises not the resuscitation (cf. 7:11-17), but the miraculous provision of food and visitation of God’s envoy.⁷¹⁷

Luke’s Nazareth account comprises the essential structure and features (in typical order) of a [virtual] theoxeny. When mortals become enigmatic guests exhibiting supernatural qualities, they act in the manner of a god (e.g., Odysseus) or on behalf of a deity (e.g., Elijah; Elisha). Nevertheless, Jesus visits as the supramundane Son of God, both in the manner of and on behalf of God, exhibiting supernatural activity without petitioning God, but through the [pneumatic] power he bears. Therefore, Jesus’ visitation may be seen as less virtual and more of a divine visitation than typical ‘virtual’ theoxenies. Resemblances to the incognito visitations of Dionysus to Thebes and Odysseus to Ithaca particularly highlight the [virtual] theoxenic essence of Jesus’ visitation and rejection in his hometown.⁷¹⁸ Simeon’s prophetic utterance—identifying Jesus as the Messiah, God’s salvation, a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel—discloses a divided response to Jesus’ visitation,

⁷¹² See n. 218.

⁷¹³ Levine 2005, 194.

⁷¹⁴ Levine 2005, 393.

⁷¹⁵ Levine 2005, 393-94 (including archaeological evidence).

⁷¹⁶ Ryan 2017, 73-74, 329-31.

⁷¹⁷ Similarly, Catchpole 1993, 246-47. Famine implies the widow feeding Elijah, a purpose clear in 1 Kgs 17:9 (Crockett 1969, 179).

⁷¹⁸ Luke 4:16-30 is programmatic also for Acts where a movement spreads like the Euripidean Dionysus’ cult.

including by kin (Luke 2:25-35). Simeon tells Mary, ‘behold, he is appointed to a falling and a rising of many in Israel and for a sign spoken against—but also a sword will pierce through your own self—in order that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed’ (2:34b-35). Fulfilment already begins when she exposes inadequate understanding during Jesus’ childhood (2:41-52). Jesus resists opposition from the chief cosmic antagonist tempting him to exploit his divine sonship (4:1-13). At Nazareth, the first illustrated episode of his adult ministry, he faces opposition from his people whom he visits to lead as Israel’s Messiah (4:16-30).⁷¹⁹ As in Simeon’s utterance, a contrast is underscored between partial Jewish rejection and Gentile acceptance. This dual theme in Luke’s Gospel opening is emphasised again in the closing of Acts (28:25-28).⁷²⁰ Jesus is the Messiah and prophet through whom God visits his people, particularly the disadvantaged, but also the nations. The Nazarenes fail to recognise this, rejecting their enigmatic guest and his message, resulting in deprivation as he proceeds elsewhere.⁷²¹ Later, Jesus’ comment that people have not recognised the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44) precedes questioning of his divine authority (20:1-8), a parable alluding to his execution as God’s beloved Son (20:9-18), and desire for his arrest (20:19-20). Even Jerusalem’s impending destruction is a punitive result (ἀνθ’ ὧν) of failure to recognise God’s visitation through Jesus (19:43-44). Reading Jesus’ Nazareth visit as a [virtual] theoxenic episode is essential for its programmatic (proleptic) function not only for the divine visitation theme, but for [virtual] theoxenic and (in)hospitality scenes of Luke-Acts.⁷²²

5.2.2. Observing Invisibility, Impalpability, or Polymorphism in Jesus’ Evasion

Bearing in mind ancient invisibility traditions (§§2.1.4; 3.1.4), Luke’s reader could imagine Jesus invisibly passing through assailants in Luke 4:30, recalling reflexive invisibility of God, angelic figures, Athene, or Circe who passes by (παρεξελθοῦσα) undetected, an exclusive ability of [Homeric] gods (*Od.* 10.569-74). Luke uses διελθῶν to describe Jesus’ penetrative action with διὰ μέσου qualifying his

⁷¹⁹ Tiede (1988, 102-103) similarly observes these and other details leading to Nazareth.

⁷²⁰ Strauss 1995, 80.

⁷²¹ Rejecting Jesus and his messengers is akin to Israelite rejection of Yahweh and his prophets resulting in exile (Luke 10:16; 11:46-54; 13:34-35; Acts 7; 13:27; see Dillon 1978, 257-60).

⁷²² Its programmatic allusions are ‘repeating prolepses’ recurrently fulfilled in Luke-Acts (cf. Genette 1980, 67-79; Kearns 1999, 142-44; Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:21).

manoeuvre as directly through the group. ‘Ease’ is reputed of gods, like Circe. Jesus effortlessly passes through the horde with “supernatural ease”.⁷²³ Nevertheless, there is no mist or cloud motif unlike elsewhere (Luke 9:34-35; 21:27; Acts 1:9; 13:11). Whereas gods easily exercise reflexive invisibility, using props if desired, humans are either made invisible by gods or rely on imbued items (e.g., Hades’ cap or Gyges’ ring) or numinous aid through spells. Although instances involving aids contribute to the prominence of invisibility in antiquity, occasionally for escape, Jesus’ evasion gives no hint of such means.⁷²⁴ Actually, Luke contrasts deeds sourced in divine power (including in Jesus’ name) with those resulting from an emic Lukan view of ‘magic’ (μαγεύω; μάγος; μαγεία), a category he pejoratively employs as deviant and prohibited without denying its existence or efficacy (Luke 11:14-23; Acts 8:9-24; 13:6-12; 19:13, 17-20).⁷²⁵

Whether or not invisible, Jesus’ escape could involve metamorphosis whereby he becomes impalpable, passing unimpeded through the Nazarenes. Jesus’ transfiguration will clearly demonstrate his alterable form (Luke 9:28-36). Bovon interprets polymorphism.⁷²⁶ Foster is more cautious, but at least accepts Jesus’ altered appearance and light as evincing metamorphosis.⁷²⁷ An altered countenance from divine glory echoing Moses’ glorified face, among OT wilderness-theophany correspondences,⁷²⁸ does not exclude transformation. Despite misplaced resurrection-appearance story theories,⁷²⁹ the reader ascribes transfiguration phenomena to the *pre-mortem* Jesus. In any case, early Christian insistence on Jesus’ tangible escape at Nazareth suggests interpretations of impalpability there. A fragment attributed to Irenaeus (ca. 130–202 CE) affirms Jesus’ corporeality: ‘And as He was capable of being handled and touched (*apprehensibilis et palpabilis*), so again did He, in a non-

⁷²³ Leaney 1971, 120.

⁷²⁴ Contra Smith 1978, 120-21, 200.

⁷²⁵ Luke does not differentiate ‘miracle’ from ‘magic’ (cf. Achtemeier 1975, 556-60 [contra Hull 1974]). Since thaumaturgic works are externally similar, Luke is concerned with phenomena whose ambiguous sources of power require clarification (e.g., apostolic preaching), and wonders by ‘magic’ are ultimately sourced in Satan, ruler of demonic powers (see Garrett 1989; Dunn 1996, 109, 175, 258-61; Marguerat 2003; cf. Aune 1980; Mills 1990, 109-123; Klauck 2000; Reimer 2002).

⁷²⁶ Bovon 2002–2013, 1:371-73.

⁷²⁷ Foster 2007, 68-69.

⁷²⁸ D.M. Miller 2010, 502-505.

⁷²⁹ E.g., Carlston 1961; doubted by Stein 1976.

apprehensible form (*non apprehensibilis*), pass through the midst of those who sought to injure Him, and entered without impediment through closed doors' (*Fr.* 52 [trans. Roberts, *ANF* 1:576]).⁷³⁰ According to Tertullian's (ca. 155–240 CE) refutation of Marcionist views, Jesus' body was palpable (not an intangible disguise) when escaping the Nazarenes who violently handled him and either gave way or were broken through (*Marc.* 4.8.2-3). Jesus' escape accommodates readings of invisibility, impalpability, or polymorphism, whether disconcerting for some early Christians, probably furnishing docetic characterisations.⁷³¹ Jesus' real physical body does not invalidate readings of somatic malleability, which are not christologically or theologically incompatible with Luke-Acts.

5.2.3. Detecting Divine Hiddenness at Nazareth

Luke's reader might recall the divine self-concealment theme of Yahweh turning away or hiding his face (i.e., presence), often resulting in punishment for misconduct (§3.1.5). Luke understood this theme laced throughout Jewish literature, especially in Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Psalms with which he proves *au fait*. Matters about Jesus' presence, identity, and mission are hidden (Luke 9:45; 10:21-22; 18:34; 19:42). The parable of the widow and unjust judge expresses divine concealment (18:1-8). Instead of translating μακροθυμεῖν as 'to delay/tarry' (18:7), Rogland suggests 'to restrain/control [oneself]' (i.e., God is patient/longsuffering) since this translates הִתְפַּאֵל (*hithpa'el*) in Sir 35:19 Hebrew which is not part of synthetic parallelism with the preceding clause and better suits both contexts.⁷³² Haacker adds other הִתְפַּאֵל (*hithpa'el*) instances conveying restraint or concealment of enmity or feelings (Gen 43:31; 45:1; Isa 42:14; 63:15; 64:11; Est 5:10), proposing that the widow's lament with God's self-restraint fits *Deus absconditus* traditions where the faithful or 'elect' doubts a self-concealing God's justice.⁷³³ Elsewhere, Stephen

⁷³⁰ Latin from Harvey (1857, 458-59) *Fr.* 29 translated from Syriac. Roberts (*ANF* 1:576 nn. 12-13) cites John 8:59, 20:26 for the respective allusions, but these are likely to Luke 4:30, 24:36.

⁷³¹ Polymorphism is not necessarily docetic, though a significant characteristic of docetism.

⁷³² Rogland 2009.

⁷³³ Haacker 2011.

declares that God ἔστρεψεν from Israel for defiance, giving them over to misdirected worship (Acts 7:42).⁷³⁴

If Jesus' departure is read as divine hiddenness,⁷³⁵ he conceals himself. He is not passively hidden (cf. Jer 36:1-19, 26).⁷³⁶ His removed presence resembles divine distancing consequent to misconduct and rejection. Jesus' self-application of Isaianic passages (Luke 4:17-19) and declaration about rejected prophets sent outside Israel (4:23-27) disclose divine salvation revealed to Gentiles through himself.⁷³⁷ Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa 42:6-7; 49:6) to whom God was elusive (45:15-17), but Jesus becomes this proclaimed light (Luke 1:78-79; 2:29-32; cf. Acts 26:18 [light as the power of God]; 26:23 [Jesus proclaiming light]) and, as a result, his emissaries, such as Paul, become a light to proclaim the gospel (Acts 13:47).⁷³⁸ Partial Jewish rejection correlative with Gentile reception expressed at Nazareth reverses Isa 45:15-17: God and Jesus become inaccessible to many Israelites, but revealed to the nations. Jesus' Israelite kinsfolk fail to recognise God's presence and salvific work among them. They have the opportunity to embrace the Messiah (Luke 4:22-23), but he distances himself and proceeds elsewhere when rejected (4:28-30). Jesus does not reject his people,⁷³⁹ but becomes inaccessible to his rejectors, departing when his presence is unwanted (cf. 8:37). Like the divine presence in Jewish history, Jesus' presence is either beneficial or convictional depending on Israel's response. Luke's reader, detecting this illustrative warning, is reassured about responding prudently to Jesus (cf. 1:4) presented in and encountered through the story.

⁷³⁴ Cf. ἀποστρέφω for turning away from righteousness (Luke 23:14) or wickedness (Acts 3:26); προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου (3:20).

⁷³⁵ Clearer in Johannine evasions (ἐκρύβη: 8:59; 12:36).

⁷³⁶ Contra Whitaker (2019, 154-56, cf. 240 n. 148) who, though considering self-concealment, opts for divinely-aided concealment (and in John 8:59), seeing Jesus depicted like a [pre-mortem] hero receiving divine aid.

⁷³⁷ See Pao 2000, 70-84.

⁷³⁸ Similarly, Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:66-67, 2:121-22, 322-25; see n. 991.

⁷³⁹ O'Toole 1993, 534. Redirected mission is not reciprocal rejection (Brawley 1987, 6-27; 1998; Denova 1997, 126-54; Hultgren 2002, 170-71). The Nazareth pericope does not express a priority of the Gentile mission (contra Ellis 1966, 96-98; Siker 1992), but exemplifies resistance to Gentile inclusion (Tiede 1988, 109; McWhirter 2013, 59).

5.2.4. Perceiving Jesus as Elusive Wisdom at Nazareth

Luke's Nazareth episode offers conceptual parallels to Wisdom (§3.1.6). In the light of Luke's Spirit-Wisdom association (cf. Acts 6:3, 10),⁷⁴⁰ Jesus is filled with the Spirit, enabling him to resist the devil (Luke 4:1), then returns to Galilee ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ πνεύματος, prefacing the Nazareth visit (4:14). At Nazareth he reads, πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμὲ (4:18).⁷⁴¹ His impactful τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος (4:22) links this account with his childhood characterisation by σοφία and χάρις (2:40, 52).⁷⁴² The Nazarenes misunderstand Jesus' identity, ministry, and message (4:18-27).⁷⁴³ Ultimately, their rejection results in his departure (4:28-30), like elusive Wisdom from those who refuse to embrace her. Jesus' pneumatically empowered message and departure contribute to Luke's Spirit-Wisdom association, further portraying Jesus as elusive Wisdom.

5.2.5. 'Passing Through' as Theophanic Judgment at Nazareth

The description of Jesus' Nazareth departure conforms to Jewish punitive theophany traditions (§3.1.7). After forty-day periods, Yahweh on Mount Horeb passes by (παρέρχομαι) Moses (Exod 24:18; 34:6-7, 28) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:8-15), commanding Elijah to proceed (πορεύομαι) on his journey. After forty days in the wilderness Jesus passes through (διέρχομαι) the Nazarenes on a mountain (ὄρος) and proceeds (πορεύομαι) on his journey (Luke 4:1-30). The divine presence *passing by* Moses and Elijah is beneficial whereas Jesus' presence *passing through* the Nazarenes is detrimental.⁷⁴⁴ In Amos, Yahweh declares that he will no longer 'pass

⁷⁴⁰ See Tannehill 1986/1990, 2:83; Barton 1999, 102-104.

⁷⁴¹ Recalling Luke 3:22, then recalled in Acts 10:38 (cf. 2:22, 33) (Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:62-63).

⁷⁴² Navone 1970, 14, 57-59; Bovon 2002-2013, 1:155. The σοφία-χάρις association is nonaccidental (Acts 7:10; cf. Sir 37:21; Jos. Asen. 4:9; 13:12; 1 En. 3:8; 2 Cor 1:12).

⁷⁴³ Despite omission here, σοφία features more prominently in Luke-Acts (Luke 2:40, 52; 7:35; 11:31, 49; 21:15; Acts 6:3, 10; 7:10, 22) compared to Mark (6:2) and Matthew (11:19; 12:42; 13:54).

⁷⁴⁴ Later during Jesus' journey to Jerusalem a blind man is told that 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by' (18:38), where the moniker ὁ Ναζωραῖος recalls the Nazareth episode and the verb παρέρχομαι in this instance connotes forgiveness of sins beyond its ordinary use for travelling (cf. Mark 10:46). The context here in Luke 18:35-43 is of a blindness healing, suggesting a physiognomic characterisation of the man as perhaps suffering due to spiritual blindness (Hartsock 2008, 182-84; Wilson 2014, 382) or even sin. This man apparently heard one of the many reports (4:14-15, 37; 5:15; 9:7-11, 18-20) that the peripatetic Jesus is the Messiah (i.e., 'Son of David', 18:38; cf. 20:41) who has

by’ (παρέρχομαι; castigatory forbearance) Israel (7:8; 8:2), but avows an inevitable theophanic judgment, declaring, ‘I shall pass through the midst of you’ (διελεύσομαι διὰ μέσου σου, 5:17). Exodus applies this punitive theophanic traversal trope in Egypt (Exod 12:12; cf. 12:23). Angelic figures perform a similar task as God commands one to ‘pass through the midst’ (διέλθε μέσην) of Jerusalem marking a spared remnant whilst others proceed behind for judgment (Ezek 9:1-11). 4Q248 5 speaks of God’s Spirit destructively ‘passing through’. Jesus διελθὼν διὰ μέσου of his Nazarene townsfolk (Luke 4:30), who represent God’s people Israel,⁷⁴⁵ legitimately reads as this trope illustrating and implying the divine elusive presence in theophanic judgment.⁷⁴⁶

Luke appropriates Amos in Acts for his theological purposes⁷⁴⁷ of Israel’s judgment⁷⁴⁸ and the Gentile mission,⁷⁴⁹ which he connects.⁷⁵⁰ Stephen quotes Amos 5:25-27 as evincing divine judgment of Israel’s idolatry (Acts 7:42-43). James quotes Amos 9:11-12 as corroborating the Gentile mission (Acts 15:16-18).⁷⁵¹ The reader recalls Israel’s partial judgment in Amos 9:8-10 (i.e., τελευτήσουσι πάντες ἁμαρτωλοὶ λαοῦ μου, 9:10), implying a faithful, spared remnant.⁷⁵² Invoking Amos in Luke 4:30 includes the book’s prominent themes: God’s omnipotence and sovereignty over the world (God of all nations); God’s demand for social and cultic

authority to forgive sins and to heal (cf. 5:17-26). Thus, the man implores Jesus to have ‘mercy’ (ἐλέησόν, 18:38) on him, with respect to his literal and spiritual blindness.

⁷⁴⁵ Cunningham 1997, 62-63; Bovon 2002–2013, 1:152; Klein 2006, 191. Identifying Capernaum as symbolising Gentiles is excessive (*pace* Johnson 1991, 82; cf. Dupont 1978, 131-32; Radl 2003, 264).

⁷⁴⁶ The force here is conveyed through ‘implicature’, whereby an utterance implies meaning beyond the formal sense of the relevant clause(s), having potential to realise the speaker’s/writer’s ‘illocutionary goal’ (Grice 1975; Leech 1983, 5-18, 30-35, 38-39; Arseneault 2014 [idioms]; Huang 2016, 210; 2017). On Luke’s use of implicature in exorcism narratives see Klutz 2004, 52-55, 113-15, 176-78, 223-24. Although this idiom typically features in God’s speech, including through prophetic medium, the Lukan narrator expresses it here.

⁷⁴⁷ Richard 1982.

⁷⁴⁸ Sandt 1991.

⁷⁴⁹ Wilson 1973, 224-25; Sandt 1992; 2009; Glenny 2012.

⁷⁵⁰ White 2016.

⁷⁵¹ Amos 9:11-12 is dominant in this ‘conflated citation’ (including Hos 3:5; Jer 12:15-16; Isa 45:21) (Adams and Ehorn 2018, 8-11).

⁷⁵² Glenny 2009, 216.

reforms; and God's visitation and judgment (the day of the Lord).⁷⁵³ Yahweh will not show partiality to Israel and Judah for their covenantal election among the nations when administering judgment at his visitation, passing through their midst.

Some scholars propose that, for Acts, Luke draws from an OT Semitic textual tradition⁷⁵⁴ or a Semitic *testimonia* source later translated by Christians into Greek differing from MT and LXX, resembling a source known to authors of CD VII 16 and 4Q174 III 12 who similarly apply the Amos content.⁷⁵⁵ However, aside from adaptations of Markan OT intertexts, Luke's OT intertextuality in special material and Acts follow the OG.⁷⁵⁶ Luke-Acts reflects pre-Lukan Christian adaptations of Exodus rather than a *Textvorlage*, often closer to the OG than Philo's quotations.⁷⁵⁷ Apparently, Luke was familiar with OG resembling the (so-called) 'Alexandrian text-type', particularly of the Minor Prophets utilised in Acts.⁷⁵⁸ Hence, Amos citations in Acts follow closer to A (occasionally B; V) than W.⁷⁵⁹ Nevertheless, OT Alexandrian readings often reflect harmonisation with NT citations.⁷⁶⁰ The Amos 5:17 reading familiar to Luke might not have been διελεύσομαι (LXX; W Q), but a cognate, such as ἐπελεύσομαι (A), εἰσελεύσομαι (26), or ἐλεύσομαι (B V).⁷⁶¹ Similarly, Luke might read ἐλεύσομαι in Exod 12:12 (B) rather than διελεύσομαι (LXX).⁷⁶² In any case, the punitive theophanic traversal trope is variously expressed. The infrequency of διά + μέσος immediately adjacent in biblical and cognate literature (Ps 135:14; Amos 5:17 [ἐν μέσῳ in Lucianic minuscules group II = 62, 147]; Jer 44:4; 1 Macc 5:46; Jdt

⁷⁵³ Amos themes: Cripps 1955, 22-32; Mays 1969, 6-12; Jeremias 1998, 2-5; cf. Jer 6:15. Paul already associates Jesus with the day of the Lord (1 Cor 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; 1 Thess 5:2; Phil 1:6-10; 2:16; Rom 2:16).

⁷⁵⁴ E.g., Wilcox 1965.

⁷⁵⁵ Stowasser 2001; followed by Schart 2006, 169-77.

⁷⁵⁶ Litke 1993.

⁷⁵⁷ Steyn 2013.

⁷⁵⁸ Clarke 1920-1933; Holtz 1968, 5-29, 37-43, 166-73; Richard 1980; Utschneider 2006, 287-88; Kraus 2010, 186-87 (not necessarily written).

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. GLXX 13:194-95, 204-205.

⁷⁶⁰ GLXX 13:40-43; Richard 1982, 44-46.

⁷⁶¹ Cf. GLXX 13:193.

⁷⁶² See n. 449.

11:19; Sus 1:60; Jos. Asen. 2:20; Sib. Or. 3:316) with the only two NT occurrences in Luke (4:30; 17:11) supports a plausible Amos 5:17 echo.⁷⁶³

Reading this trope in Luke 4:30 coincides with the episode prefiguring broad (albeit partial) Jewish rejection alongside Gentile inclusion, a theme developed in Acts.⁷⁶⁴ Luke embeds rejection at Nazareth between acceptance in Galilee (Luke 4:14-15) and Capernaum (4:31-43), demonstrating Israel's *partial* rejection or *divided* response (cf. 2:34-35; 7:29-30).⁷⁶⁵ For Luke, God's plan of salvation⁷⁶⁶ is not about Jewish salvific privilege or exclusivity (cf. 3:8), but entails inclusion of non-covenant people evinced by the scriptural-grounded and Spirit-confirmed Gentile mission (2:32-35; 24:47; Acts 1:8 [programmatic for Acts]; 3:25; 9:15; 10:34-38 [recalling Nazareth], 43-48; 11:1-18; 13:46-48; 14:27; 15:1-33; 18:5-6; 22:21; 26:20-23; 28:28).⁷⁶⁷ Jesus quotes Isa 61:1-2a and 58:6 without pronouncing the 'day of recompense' (ἡμέραν ἀνταποδόσεως, 61:2b) anticipated upon Gentiles (Luke 4:18-19).⁷⁶⁸ Jesus' own people who expect entitlement will not experience privileged treatment or deliverance merely for their relational status, and will reject him, but

⁷⁶³ Considering Hays' (1989, 29-32; cf. 2016) seven criteria for testing biblical-scriptural echoes/metalepses (in Pauline epistles), we observe that: (1) Amos was 'available' to Luke and his reader; (2) 'volume' is high with the construction διέρχουμαι/cognate (verbal form or participle) + διά + μέσος + pronoun referring to Israelites/Nazarenes; (3) 'recurrence' of Amos 5:17 is inevident, but the trope may be expressed with Jesus and/or disciples traversing territories, and Acts quotes Amos; (4) 'thematic coherence' is strong with overlapping theological concerns in Amos, Luke 4:16-30, and applications of Amos in Acts; (5) 'historical plausibility' is evident with intelligible contexts of God's people acting defiantly followed by symbolised divine judgment; (6) 'history of interpretation' is seen with at least one critic connecting these passages (Pusey [see n. 84]); and (7) 'satisfaction' is clear with Luke's peculiar phrase elucidated as punitive theophanic traversal, illuminating the pericope.

⁷⁶⁴ Luke has no anti-Jewish agenda (Danker 1988, 13-15; C.A. Evans 1990; O'Toole 1993; Brawley 1998; *pace* Winn 1959; Sandmel 1978, 71-100; Hare 1979; Maddox 1982; Tyson 1986, 29-47; 1988; 1992; Sanders 1987; 1988; 1991), but considers rejectors to forego salvation (Jervell 1972, 41-74; 1996, 18-43, 94-100; Tannehill 1985; cf. Shellard 2002, 49-51; Meek 2008, 13, 16-23, 135-36). Luke-Acts also depicts pre-salvific Gentile deprivation (Stenschke 1999). For Luke, a faithful *remnant* of Israel and receptive Gentiles constitute God's kingdom; thus, what remains open at Acts' conclusion is impartial salvific opportunity, not potential restoration of entire 'racial-national Israel' (with Talbert 2003, 108-109, 161-73; cf. Fuller 2006; *pace* Marguerat 2004, 206-216, 226-29; Bovon 2006, 493-94; cf. Koet 1992; Fusco 1996; Wolter 1999; 2009, 290-335).

⁷⁶⁵ Weatherly 1994, 122-28; Strauss 1995, 117-20, 220-24; Buckwalter 1996, 51-54; Litwak 2005, 183-99.

⁷⁶⁶ Without denying a Lukan *Heilsgeschichte*, scholars rightly criticise Conzelmann's (1953; cf. 1960) tripartite chronology and minimisation of eschatology (Denova 1997, 57-72; cf. Bovon 2006, 1-85). On God's 'plan'/βουλή see Squires 1993.

⁷⁶⁷ See Parsons 2007, 150 (scriptural-grounded); Wilson 1973, 53-58 (Spirit-associated); Hays 2016, 229-30 (Jesus' scriptural invocations at Nazareth challenge Jewish nationalistic privilege assumptions).

⁷⁶⁸ See Albertz 1983.

Israel's sovereign God extends compassion to the nations, just as prophets were sent to Gentiles outside Israel (4:23-27). Rejecting Jesus is to reject God's plan, and salvation becomes unattainable, sealing judgment (cf. 6:47-49; 7:30; 9:48; 10:16;⁷⁶⁹ 16:19-31; Acts 3:13-15; 4:10-12; 13:46; 24:25), as messengers of salvation 'proceed' onward (Luke 9:51-56). Thus, his disciples must revoke peace and testify against towns rejecting them (9:5; 10:5-6, 10-12). Later, Jesus passing through Samaria and Galilee (17:11) recalls divided responses and Gentile-inclusive allusions during Jesus' Galilean ministry, then only a healed Samaritan thanks him (17:12-19). Ultimately, responses (Jewish or Gentile) to Jesus engender divine verdicts.

The reader hears διελθὼν διὰ μέσου αὐτῶν (Luke 4:30) signalling the punitive theophanic presence, a familiar Jewish trope applied to Jesus passing through his people's midst in judgment.⁷⁷⁰ Judgment is both immediate and delayed. The Nazarene hostiles do not face sudden wrath, but exclusion from God's kingdom is definitive. The description eliciting an illustration of judgment coincides with retribution and exceptional departure concluding a divine visitation (§5.2.1).

5.2.6. Sensing Supernatural Control in Jesus' Escape

Luke's reader might infer Jesus' supernatural control, allowing unharmed departure in Luke 4:30 (§§2.1.5; 3.1.8). Jesus, if not invisible or impalpable, could move through the Nazarenes who make way or cannot prevent him. The reader may imagine the multitude visually or mentally restrained,⁷⁷¹ like Elisha going forth into the midst of his enemies (προελθὼν εἰς μέσους τοὺς ἐχθρούς, Josephus, *Ant.* 9.56) since God obscures their minds to prevent recognition (9.56-57; recounting of 2 Kgs 6:15-21) or Ptolemy pacified by divine control to deliver the Jews from execution (3 Macc 5-6). Homeric gods also manipulate mortals and circumstances. Deities reputedly hinder people (*Od.* 23.11-14) and Athene prevents Penelope from recognising Odysseus (19.478-79). Odysseus evades hurled objects (17.458-88, 489-91; 18.406-409; 20.299-302), occasionally with Athene's aid (22.255-60; *Il.* 20.438-

⁷⁶⁹ Du Toit (2014, 199-200) speaks of rejecting God's presence hidden in Jesus (10:16; cf. Matt 10:40 [emphasising acceptance]).

⁷⁷⁰ Emphasis on διελθὼν (participle) near the beginning of the clause signals the trope. Although following αὐτός, διελθὼν adverbially modifies ἐπορεύετο (i.e., 'but he, [by/after] passing through the midst of them, proceeded on').

⁷⁷¹ Hartsock (2008, 177-78) suggests that the crowd 'blindly' does not notice Jesus.

41). Similarly, David (1 Sam 18:10-12 HB; 19:9-10) evades spears and praises Yahweh for rescue from hostility (2 Sam 22; Ps 18). However, there is no divine intervention or mist at Nazareth. Dionysus controls circumstances, eluding capture and liberating himself (Eur., *Bacch.* 604-607, 616-22; cf. 585-641, 862-911), only suffering what he will (515-18). He punishes Pentheus for recalcitrance and failure to recognise him as the son of Zeus (847-61). Jesus, unrecognised as the Son of God (Luke 4:22), escapes at Nazareth, only suffering what he will (4:28-30; cf. 22:52-54). Those who unwittingly devise evil against him and wrong him (denying his identity) are not guiltless (22:21-22; cf. 22:2-6, 47-48).

The reader is aware that other supramundane figures exercise supernatural control, such as angels, Satan, or demonic beings. Even mortals have avenues for this phenomenon, but nothing indicates Jesus' recourse to beguilement or arts sourced in cosmic power to escape. Reading Jesus' supernatural control finds support from clearer displays, including abilities or authority beyond that of angels and performances opposed to Satan and demonic entities: healings, exorcisms, miraculously draughting fish, stilling a storm, and feeding thousands of people with limited food.⁷⁷²

Reading Jesus' control of circumstances at Nazareth illuminates the journey and hostility evasion motifs in which he demonstrates sovereignty over his arrest and passion. During childhood he exhibits sovereignty over his circumstances and prefigured destiny (Luke 2:40-52; see Chapter 4). At Nazareth he demonstrates awareness of his passion, proleptically alluding to detractors mocking him, 'Physician, heal yourself!' (4:23; cf. 23:35-39).⁷⁷³ When scribes and Pharisees plot against him, he withdraws to a mountain (6:6-12). He informs his disciples of his (the Son of Man's) pending betrayal into human 'hands' (*παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων*, 9:44). Herod seeks to kill him, but he responds that he must (*δεῖ*) proceed (*πορεύεσθαι*) to Jerusalem where he will succumb to this fate (13:31-33). Jewish leaders cannot kill him because his teachings in the temple enthral people (19:47-48).

⁷⁷² The reader ponders the mechanics of these deliberately ambiguous depictions but may ultimately deem them remarkable/paradoxical, like narrative witnesses (cf. Luke 5:26).

⁷⁷³ Some scholars observe an Isaianic suffering servant Christology at Nazareth, including modelled servanthood (Buckwalter 1996, 251-53; O'Toole 2000, 333-40). According to Jipp (2010), Psalms (cf. Pss. Sol. 17-18) are mostly the scriptural basis for Jesus as the suffering Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts; cf. Miura 2007, 198.

Scribes and chief priests want ‘to lay hands on him’ (ἐπιβαλεῖν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας), but ‘they fear’ (ἐφοβήθησαν) his following, so ‘closely watching’ (παρατηρήσαντες) him, they send spies to entrap him teaching (20:19-20; cf. 22:2). This resembles Saul constantly seeking to lay hands on David whom people love but he fears (1 Sam 18:12-16). Saul is deterred from pursuing David when Philistines invade, apparently by divine orchestration (23:27-29). Attempts to entrap, arrest, or kill Jesus are reminiscent of Jacob’s (Israel’s) sons plotting to kill or dispose of their brother Joseph, throwing him into a pit (Gen 37:18-25). Joseph is preserved and exalted, eventually revealing himself to his brothers who fail to recognise him (Gen 37-45). Jesus reveals his knowledge of Judas’ betrayal (Luke 22:21-22),⁷⁷⁴ and finally submits to arrest, telling authorities, ‘Although I was with you daily in the temple you did not stretch forth hands upon me (οὐκ ἐξετείνατε τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ’ ἐμέ)’ (22:53). They seize him (συλλαβόντες) and lead him away (ἤγαγον; εἰσήγαγον, 22:54). After his resurrection, *angeli interpretes* reiterate that the Son of Man must (δεῖ) ‘be given over into the hands (παραδοθῆναι εἰς χεῖρας) of sinful men’ (24:7).⁷⁷⁵ As we shall see, Jesus’ Nazareth escape prefigures his disciples’ hostility evasions in Acts,⁷⁷⁶ but also contrasts with their deliverances by divine causality, including by Jesus’ sovereignty (Chapter 8).

Luke’s hostility evasion motif depicts Jesus’ sovereign avoidance of untimely suffering. Χεῖρ-idioms (χεῖρ-terminology) amplify conceptions of physical aggression, accentuating Jesus’ elusiveness.⁷⁷⁷ Hostility evasion is not unique to Luke among NT Gospels.⁷⁷⁸ Jesus in other Synoptics eludes captors by being hidden as a baby (Matt 2:13), withdrawing and/or enjoining silence (Mark 3:6-7; 11:18-19 [at evening]; Matt 12:14-21; cf. 10:23), answering challenges with superior acumen (Mark 12:13-17//Matt 22:15-22), and benefiting from potential rioting (Mark 14:1-2;

⁷⁷⁴ Probably the devil’s ‘opportune time’ (4:13), entering Judas (22:3).

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Acts 2:23.

⁷⁷⁶ Also Cunningham 1997, 65.

⁷⁷⁷ Χεῖρ-constructions conveying seizure or harm are common: ἐπιβάλλω + χεῖρ (Aristophanes, *Nub.* 933; *Lys.* 440; 2 Sam 18:12; Est 1:1; 6:2; Isa 11:14; Josephus, *Ant.* 2.53; 3.41; *J.W.* 2.491; *Life* 1.302; Mark 14:46//Matt 26:50; John 7:30, 44; Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:1; 21:27); ἐκτείνω + χεῖρ (Gen 19:10; 22:10; Deut 25:11; Jos 8:18-19; 1 Kgs 13:4; 1 Esd 6:32; Ezra 6:12; Neh 13:21; 1 Macc 6:25; 9:47; 12:39, 42; 14:31).

⁷⁷⁸ Athanasius (*Apol. Fug.* 12, 15) includes Luke 4:30 among examples of the divine Jesus’ humanity by fleeing until his passion (Matt 2:13; 12:15; John 8:59; 11:53-54).

Matt 21:46; 26:4-5; cf. 26:55), until his passion (Mark 15:1//Matt 27:1-2). The Johannine Jesus circumvents adversaries (cf. John 8:37, 40; 11:8) by persuasive oration (5:16-47; 7:19-36, 43-53; 10:31-42), avoiding regions (7:1-13; 11:47-57; cf. 6:15), and concealment (8:59; 12:36) until his hour comes (John 7:30; 8:20; 11:30; cf. 7:6; 18:1-11), accounts occasionally featuring χεῖρ-idioms (7:30, 44; 10:39).⁷⁷⁹ Although hostility evasion is perhaps most emphatic in John, assuming Luke 4:28-30 was composed prior to John editions, this Lukan passage first accentuates Jesus' evasive character by illustrating actual escape.⁷⁸⁰

5.3. Synthesis and Observations

Perhaps Luke has no specific manner of escape in mind in the deliberately ambiguous narrative gap of Luke 4:30, but we see how the text delimits suitable options to Jesus' reflexive, physically present, and miraculous action, and guides the reader to consider some legitimate, extratextual-informed interpretations. Some ostensibly suitable readings, such as disappearance or angelic deliverance, are problematised upon closer scrutiny. Moreover, rather than imitating a specific text, the polysemic event allows multiple hypotheses and significations.⁷⁸¹ Any interpretation requires conjecture, but my proposed readings are most plausible, agreeing with textual limitations without supplementing characters (i.e., God, angels, or assistants), mists, or aids which complicate speculation.

I may summarise my readings and emerging christological implications. There is substantial support for understanding Luke's Nazareth pericope as a [virtual] theoxenic episode resulting in an illustration of divine judgment with the punitive theophanic traversal trope at the enigmatic visitor's phenomenal departure. The supposed 'son of Joseph' miraculously departs with ease—albeit through divine pneumatic empowerment—in a manner reputed of gods, educing questions concerning his identity and manner of escape. The reader, informed especially by the preceding narrative in Luke 1-4, recognises divine visitation and judgment through

⁷⁷⁹ See §1.1.1.ii.

⁷⁸⁰ The infant Matthean Jesus is passively hidden.

⁷⁸¹ Luke 4:30 describes an actual manoeuvre with an idiomatic expression. It is no 'homonymy'—similar wording in different [accidental] instances without metaphorical connection (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 110-14).

the Son of God whose presence is either beneficial or detrimental, and is also reassured about responding sensibly to Jesus. This entails divine visitor and judge Christologies, the latter inherent to the former, with Jesus as God's visitor symbolically enacting divine judgment. Luke 4:30 leaves room for legitimate readings of invisibility, impalpability, or other somatic malleability, but Jesus' invincibility is certain. Such readings lend to the rise of Christologies characterised by incipient polymorphism. The Spirit-filled Jesus amazing the narrative audience with gracious words and departing when rejected advances the implicit Wisdom Christology highlighted in the childhood episode. Furthermore, as Yahweh's unparalleled representative, Jesus removes his presence due to misconduct in accordance with the divine hiddenness theologoumenon. Finally, extratextual and intratextual popularity of supernatural control⁷⁸² and Jesus' sovereign hostility evasions during his necessary journey support reading his supernatural control of cognition, perception, or circumstances at Nazareth. All these attest to his exceptionally theomorphic identity.

Just as Luke's childhood story illustrates an episode surrounded by narratives of Jesus' earliest years, so the Nazareth and Capernaum accounts (4:16-41) are concrete illustrations between summary statements of his proclamation and deeds, forming an *inclusio* (4:14-15, 42-44).⁷⁸³ The reader formulates a portrayal of an elusive Jesus at Nazareth from indirect characterisation details: Jesus self-applies Isaianic passages foreshadowing his ministry as a wonder-working, heavenly figure; this causes narrative responses of marvelling and speculation about his identity (which the reader emulates); he predicts his mocked passion; he alludes to OT stories of Gentile inclusion; he arrives as an ostensibly familiar, yet enigmatic visitor; and he causes a hostile response, but evades execution. Jesus' elusive presence will continue throughout adulthood as the programmatic Nazareth episode illustrates, further building an elusiveness theme—broader than accounted for by *Geheimnis*-theories—and maintaining reader engagement and intrigue, delaying the *dénouement*.⁷⁸⁴ In the

⁷⁸² See Chapters 6-8 (intratextual instances).

⁷⁸³ Green 1997, 200, 203 n. 2; Longenecker 2012, 52.

⁷⁸⁴ Texts depend on informational delays and gaps suspending intelligibility to 'tempt' continued reading, maintaining intrigue (see Rimmon-Kenan 2002, 125-29). Baroni (2007; 2016) expounds on reader intrigue from narrative tension awaiting the *dénouement*, such as suspense, curiosity (unfamiliar information), and surprise (new information), also preserved in re-reading.

following chapters we shall see how the reader encounters Jesus' elusiveness especially during two more paradigmatic stages: a concrete illustration of his resurrection appearances (Luke 24) and his ascended-exalted manifestation on the Damascus road (Acts).

Zacchaeus striving for a glimpse at the elusive figure reputed for phenomenal performances and teachings traversing Israel (Luke 19:1-10) reflects the intrigued reader and critic alike desiring a better 'view' of the Lukan Jesus.

CHAPTER 6

ELUSIVENESS IN THE EMMAUS EPISODE (LUKE 24:13-35)

6.1. Evaluating Scholarly Interpretations and Establishing Interpretive Limitations

In this chapter I examine how the reader's portraiture of the elusive Jesus and detection of an elusiveness theme continue after Jesus' resurrection, particularly with the Emmaus road episode (Luke 24:13-35). Narrative ambiguities of the disciples' imperception (Luke 24:16), recognition (24:31a), and Jesus' disappearance (24:31b) produce numerous scholarly interpretations.⁷⁸⁵ After evaluating the legitimacy of common interpretations considering textual delimitations, I examine the reader's plausible extratextual-informed readings. We shall see how the reader discerns Jesus' unrecognised (though undisguised) visitation by cognitive-perceptual control, concluding with a reflexive, sudden vanishing. My suggested readings support scholarly understandings of the story as a theoxenic episode, though my examination offers a more critical evaluation of supernatural control analogues for conceptualising Jesus' (un)recognition. My concentration on Jesus' Emmaus disappearance contributes a more thoroughgoing analysis than endeavoured in previous scholarship which has relied on uncritical comparisons of ostensible parallels. This assessment challenges scholars' tendency to extrapolate the resurrected Jesus' acquisition of special corporeal properties by highlighting a continuity of his pre- and post-mortem physical transience. These readings perpetuate the reader's conceptualisation of Jesus' exceptional theomorphism.

6.1.1. Scholarly Attribution of the Disciples' (Im)perception to Factors other than Jesus' Supernatural Control

Figurative expressions about Cleopas and his companion's⁷⁸⁶ (im)perception—οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτόν... αὐτῶν

⁷⁸⁵ Whether redacted tradition (Nolland 1989–1993, 3:1198-1200), this account conforms to Lukan style (Leaney 1955; Wanke 1973; Klein 2006, 726-27). Considering longer readings versus so-called 'Western non-interpolations' (omissions in Matt 27:49; Luke 22:19b-20; 24:3, 6, 12, 36, 40, 51, 52; cf. Parsons 1986; Metzger 1994, 164-66; Martin 2005), I remain cognisant of textual variances/emendations.

⁷⁸⁶ Not part of the Twelve (6:13-16), but among τοῖς λοιποῖς (24:9) (Edwards 2015, 717-18).

δὲ διηνοίχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν (Luke 24:16, 31a)—form narrative gaps with unspecified causation.⁷⁸⁷ The passives ἐκρατοῦντο and διηνοίχθησαν create ambiguity inviting reader speculation, and some scholars deem these ‘divine/theological passives’.⁷⁸⁸ Proposed explanations include:⁷⁸⁹ the disciples’ incredulity (‘spiritual blindness’ or unexpectedness);⁷⁹⁰ Jesus’ altered appearance;⁷⁹¹ an external force (God, Jesus, or another power);⁷⁹² or a combination of these.⁷⁹³ The text problematises incredulity and altered appearance, but lends to Jesus’ controlling activity.

Incredulity preventing recognition of Jesus’ appearance, voice, and mannerisms whilst journeying and reclining for a meal is improbable, even if Jesus is cosmetically disguised or pretending.⁷⁹⁴ Unlike Pentheus’ impiety obstructing realisation that a stranger is Dionysus (Eur., *Bacch.* 500-502), Jesus’ disciples cannot recognise their friend.⁷⁹⁵ Some of the cohort are doubtful during Jesus’ reappearance (Luke 24:36-43), despite witnesses to the empty tomb, angelic confirmation, and other Christophanies (24:1-12, 22-24, 30-35). They recognise Jesus,⁷⁹⁶ but suppose he is a πνεῦμα, so he reassures them of his bodily revivification (24:37-43).⁷⁹⁷ This is clear to the reader. Although σῶμα occurs only with reference to the tomb (24:3, 23),

⁷⁸⁷ Kurz (1993, 69) acknowledges the 24:16 gap. (Un)recognition in visual terms here exemplifies a conceptual metaphor which Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 53-54, 84, 126-27, 393-94, *passim*; cf. 1980) summarise as ‘Knowing Is Seeing’, with the metonym ‘eyes’ [restrained or opened] mapped as the concrete/sensorimotor source domain connoting knowledge of Jesus as the abstract target domain (subjective judgment).

⁷⁸⁸ E.g., Dupont 1953, 365; Ehrhardt 1963, 183-84; Ellis 1966, 276-77; Dillon 1978, 104-108, 133, 145-49; Just 1993, 256, 259; Edwards 2015, 716-17, 724. See n. 95; cf. ἀνεώχθη suggesting God’s activity (Luke 1:64; cf. 1:20, 22) (see §8.2.3).

⁷⁸⁹ See §1.1.2.iii.

⁷⁹⁰ E.g., Caird, Tannehill, Green, and Wolter. Cf. Luke 16:31.

⁷⁹¹ E.g., Johnson; Spencer; citing LEM: Godet; Plummer.

⁷⁹² E.g., God (Loisy, Wanke, Marshall, Fitzmyer, Danker, Bock, Klein; Morris); Jesus (C.F. Evans); demonic (Eckey) or Satanic (Nolland).

⁷⁹³ E.g., appearance and incredulity (van Oosterzee, Geldenhuys); appearance and restraint (Meyer, Betz, Bock); restraint and incredulity (Wanke, Marshall, Nolland, Bovon, Levine and Witherington); or all these (Godet, Plummer, Klostermann).

⁷⁹⁴ See n. 320.

⁷⁹⁵ *Pace* Seaford 1996, 190.

⁷⁹⁶ Contra Dillon 1978, 193-97; Klein 2006, 736; Levine and Witherington 2018, 665. Better is Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 2:1560, 1573 (incomprehension).

⁷⁹⁷ Presenting limbs in 24:40 was likely omitted from ‘Western non-interpolations’ for repetition (cf. 24:39a).

Jesus *himself* (inter)acts (cf. αὐτός: 24:15, 25, 28, 31, 36; ἐγώ: 24:39 [x5, including emphatic ἐγώ εἰμι αὐτός]; περὶ ἑαυτοῦ: 24:27)—that is, the *same* Jesus.⁷⁹⁸ Whereas the predicament during the reappearance is residual incredulity/doubt, on the Emmaus road it is identifiability and misunderstood messianism.

Interpreting Jesus' altered/unfamiliar appearance or acquisition of special corporeal abilities is also dubious. Jesus' missing body (Luke 24:3; cf. Mark 16:5-6//Matt 28:5-6) could signal translation/immortalisation⁷⁹⁹ or natural factors⁸⁰⁰ (e.g., relocation).⁸⁰¹ Miller suggests a 'translation fable trope' signalling transformation into a demigod with Jesus' body acquiring abilities of metamorphosis and (de)materialisation.⁸⁰² A catalyst for interpreting Jesus' altered form causing imperception in Luke 24 is interpolating readings of LEM 16:12 (ἐφανερῶθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ). Foster interprets the Lukan Jesus' unrecognisability as divine restraint and ability to (dis)appear (cf. John 20:19, 26) as indicating "special bodily properties" rendered polymorphic in LEM.⁸⁰³ LEM reflects early reception of Luke 24 as involving translation,⁸⁰⁴ and may refer to altered corporeality⁸⁰⁵ or selective (un)recognisability (cf. 16:13-14), but neither LEM nor Luke explicitly attribute unrecognisability to changed appearance. Actually, the issue throughout LEM is incredulity, not unrecognisability. Although Luke's reader potentially infers translation, given knowledge of the resurrection (Luke 9:22, 44-45; 16:31; 18:31-34; 22:22, 69; cf. 1:4), the disciples make no such inference.

⁷⁹⁸ Ehrhardt 1963, 184-85 (evincing the 'identical Jesus' as the 'active/supernatural principle'); Talbert 1992.

⁷⁹⁹ See n. 87; cf. 2 Macc 7; 2 Bar. 49-51; 1 Cor 15:35-54; Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 21. Josephus (*Ant.* 9.28) ambiguously relates translations of Enoch, Elijah, and Moses, distinguishing them from God (Tabor 1989) or implying *Entriückungen* (Begg 1990). Although some scholars find earliest Christian appropriation of apotheosis unlikely, being 'pagan' or jeopardising monotheism (Lösch 1933; Hurtado 2003, 91-93; 2005, 22-55, 95), others support this scenario (Strecker 1962; Yarbrow Collins 1995; 2007, 56; 2009). Cook (2018) differentiates resurrection (revivification) and translation (relocation/immortalisation/deification), likening the latter to Jesus' ascension.

⁸⁰⁰ Van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000, 193; Spencer 2008, 213-14.

⁸⁰¹ Cf. Matt 28:11-15; John 20:2, 9, 13.

⁸⁰² Miller 2015, 31-32, 43-45, 66-70, 164-66, 173.

⁸⁰³ Foster 2007, 69-73.

⁸⁰⁴ See §1.1.2.iii. Augustine reads LEM into Luke's account (*Ep.* 95.7), interpreting symbolic unrecognisability (121.15), and a spurious epistle conflates accounts, comparing Jesus' altered form to the transfiguration where the disciples are at least aware (*Ep.* 149.31). Cf. Herm. Vis. 5.3-5 (Jesus' recognisability after restored form).

⁸⁰⁵ Hug 1978, 64-66.

This possible missing body signal is relevant to *Leidensgeheimnis* theories. According to Dillon, the empty tomb does not result in resurrection faith, but the disciples are perplexed and unapprised until the ascension—despite Christophanies and elucidation of [the Son of Man’s] necessary suffering—thus perpetuating a *Leidensgeheimnis* sustained by the journey and misunderstanding motifs.⁸⁰⁶ However, Plevnik observes progressive understanding and resurrection faith throughout Luke 24.⁸⁰⁷ *Angeli interpretes* remind the women of Jesus’ resurrection (24:1-10, 22-23), but others deem their testimony ‘nonsense’ (λῆρος, 24:11); though Peter is not entirely sceptical and inspects the tomb (24:12) with others, αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον (24:24).⁸⁰⁸ The travellers are unconvinced (24:13-15, 17-24) until Jesus explicates the scriptural validation for messianic roles and they recognise him (24:25-35).⁸⁰⁹ The cohort (i.e., the Eleven and their companions; cf. 24:9, 33) eventually believes that Jesus is resurrected to some extent and appearing (24:34-37); whether believing before seeing or seeing before believing, the disciples become eyewitnesses together, having believed, understood, and personally witnessed Jesus alive.⁸¹⁰ Expanding Plevnik’s observations, I should stress that Jesus verifies his revivification, but the cohort misunderstands messianic preconditions until he opens their mind (24:38-48). Resurrection faith results from angelic testimony, Christophanies, scriptural clarification, and epistemological development. The missing body signalling translation or resurrection to the disciples is doubtful.

Some scholars appropriately discern a resurrection-ascension-exaltation complex of a single concomitant event preserved in a primitive pre-Lukan kerygma (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:32-36; 5:30-31) with its multifaceted aspects allocated distinct perspectives (narrativisations/historicisations) in Luke 24 and Acts 1 (cf. 10:40;

⁸⁰⁶ Dillon 1978. Yet, ‘Son of Man’ self-references (only on Jesus’ lips) pertain to Jesus’ ministry, messianic suffering, and future judging, notwithstanding Acts 7:56 (Johnson 1991, 94). Although non-Lukan representations are less clearly associated with messiahship or rejection (cf. Dan 7:13; Ezek 2:1, 3; 1 En. 46:2-4), Luke’s messianic ‘Son of Man’ exercises divine authority, is rejected, and must suffer (Lieu 1997, 72-73; Green 1997, 370). Peter speaks for others (cf. Luke 9:8, 20) aware of Jesus’ messiahship, even if misunderstanding suffering.

⁸⁰⁷ Plevnik 1987. They share diverse experiences until Jesus appears corporately, confirming and reconciling reports (Seim 2002).

⁸⁰⁸ Plevnik 1987, 91-94. The reader identifies with the women who know Jesus is raised, not with sceptical (male) disciples (Seim 1994, 147-63; 2002 151-53).

⁸⁰⁹ Plevnik 1987, 94-98.

⁸¹⁰ Plevnik 1987, 98-103. The difficulty of when Jesus appears to Simon engendered textual discrepancies (e.g., 24:12 omitted from ‘Western non-interpolations’; cf. John 20:3, 5-6, 10).

13:30).⁸¹¹ Given Luke’s artificial parsing of this event, is Jesus glorified at his resurrection⁸¹² or ascension?⁸¹³ Zwiep advocates an “early Jewish rapture-preservation paradigm” with a resurrection-exaltation complex, so the ascension illustrates a conclusion to Jesus’ glorified appearance.⁸¹⁴ Unlike Zwiep favouring Jewish rapture stories (Enoch, Elijah, Moses, Baruch, and Ezra), Litwa proposes an ancient Mediterranean corporeal immortalisation scheme (including Asclepius, Heracles, Cleomedes, and Romulus) with Jesus’ immortalised/deified body acquiring “special properties”.⁸¹⁵ Nevertheless, for Luke, external appearances are fairly preserved in the afterlife, characterised by materiality, corporeal properties, and recognisability, despite transformations/angelomorphism (cf. Luke 16:19-31).⁸¹⁶ Somov posits that Jesus’ inimitable resurrection before the narrativised ascension is characteristic of angelomorphism of the righteous and a two-stage resurrection (2 Bar. 50:2; 51:3b, 5-6, 9; 2 Macc 7), but combines aspects of the individual and eschatological resurrections, inaugurating the latter.⁸¹⁷ Somov comments that whilst emphasising Jesus’ bodily resurrection, Luke does not overlook supernatural abilities ([dis]appearing, unrecognisability, invisibility, and ascension).⁸¹⁸ Talbert writes, “His existence, although bodily, is nevertheless not limited by the normal human constraints”.⁸¹⁹ Edwards comments, “Jesus’ resurrected body is a spiritually transformed body no longer subject to physical properties alone” and “The sudden

⁸¹¹ See O’Toole 1979; ascension: Lohfink 1971, 242-83; Bovon 2006, 190-98; 2002–2013, 3:408-409.

⁸¹² Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:193-95, 2:1566; Lohfink 1971; Dillon 1978, 141-43; van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000, 180-200.

⁸¹³ Franklin 1975, 29-41; Nolland 1989–1993, 3:1204-1205, 1226 (Jesus not appearing from heaven); Cook 2018, 612-18; cf. Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:284 n. 13 (both during a “single process”).

⁸¹⁴ Zwiep 1997 (following Alsup’s OT theophany *Gattung*); 2001; preceded by (*mutatis mutandis*), e.g., Michaelis 1925; Benoit 1973–1974, 1:209-253; Maile 1986.

⁸¹⁵ Litwa 2014, 141-79; 2019, 169-78 [173], 187-93. Alsup (1975, 239) and Zwiep (1997, 39-40, 159-60) are sceptical of cross-cultural transferability. Zwiep (1997, 115-16, 195; 2001, 334-45) nevertheless suggests that Graeco-Roman raptures (immortalisation/deification concluding pious lives) are more formally parallel to Lukan terminology and motifs, but OT-Jewish raptures (elect individuals) are more structurally parallel to Luke’s ascension narratives. Still, Zwiep over-differentiates and marginalises Graeco-Roman traditions (van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000, 198-99; Miller 2015, 177, 190).

⁸¹⁶ Lehtipuu 2007, 223-30.

⁸¹⁷ Somov 2017, 134-39, 208-214. On 2 Bar. 49-51 see Fletcher-Louis 1997, 38-50, 109-215; Pentti 2013.

⁸¹⁸ Somov 2017, 139. ‘Invisibility’ seems extraneous.

⁸¹⁹ Talbert 1992, 25.

appearance of Jesus, following his similar disappearance (v. 31), demonstrates the difference between his earthly and resurrection bodily capabilities”.⁸²⁰ Wright promotes Jesus’ continuous ‘transphysicality’, but qualifies this as discontinuous with gained abilities ([dis]appearing and unrecognisability).⁸²¹ However, the reader deducing physical transience with Jesus’ teleportative return from Jerusalem (Luke 4:13-14; cf. 4:9), Nazareth escape, and transfiguration discerns substantial continuity between Jesus’ pre- and post-mortem states and abilities.⁸²²

Bucur attributes the unglorified disciples’ imperception to an incompatibility with Jesus’ invisible eschatological glory and its inhibiting properties.⁸²³ Nevertheless, more explicit effulgence is lacking (cf. Luke 24:26) in contradistinction to the transfiguration (9:28-36), Stephen’s vision (Acts 7:55), and the Damascus road encounter (9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:13-18).⁸²⁴ Bucur endeavours to overcome this difficulty, proposing that Jesus’ glory is invisible, like *lumine invisibili* extending to Moses’ entire body rendering him unrecognisable in LAB 12:1 (cf. 61:5-9; 2 Bar. 49-51; LEM 16:12).⁸²⁵ However, *lumine invisibili* is an unbearably bright light (cf. LAB 28:9; 2 Cor 3:7; Josephus, *J.W.* 5.219; 6.6 [ἀθέατος])⁸²⁶ and *perfusus esset* speaks only of Moses’ face which he veils (LAB 12:1).⁸²⁷ The Israelites fail to recognise Moses (*videntes non cognoscebant eum*; like Joseph’s brothers) until he speaks because unbearable luminosity shields his face. LAB construes the biblical narrative as suggesting Moses’ changed countenance since Aaron and the elders see him, but hesitate approaching until he calls (Exod 34:29-35).⁸²⁸ Luke’s allusion to the biblical account in Jesus’ transfiguration (9:29) is apparent by emphasis on Jesus’ πρόσωπον

⁸²⁰ Edwards 2015, 724, 728; already, Cyril of Alexandria, *Comm. Luke*, ser. 155 (incorruptible form).

⁸²¹ Wright 2003, 477-78, 543, 604-609, 654, 661, 711.

⁸²² See §§1.2; 5.1.2; 5.2.2; 7.1.2.

⁸²³ Bucur 2014; 2019, 6-41.

⁸²⁴ NT resurrection appearances lack other apocalyptic elements, e.g., clouds, smoke, fire, or earthquake (Dodd 1955, 21, 26, 34; Wright 2003, 604-607; Seim 2002, 160).

⁸²⁵ Bucur 2014, 693-94, 697; he reads LEM through the Lukan transfiguration inferring luminosity (cf. ἔτερος; LEM 16:12; Luke 9:29), but LEM is vague.

⁸²⁶ Jacobson 1996, 1:482.

⁸²⁷ See §3.1.2.

⁸²⁸ Jacobson 1996, 1:483.

altered in divine glory.⁸²⁹ Thus, transferred theophanic luminosity is visible on Moses' face in Exodus (33:18-23; 34:5-8, 29-35) and LAB 12:1 (brighter than the sun and moon), and on Jesus' face in Luke 9:29, though it is uninhibiting.

Although Bucur acknowledges coextensive divine imposition in Luke 24:16 for the sake of Jesus' pedagogy, he speaks of eye-opening (24:31a) as realisation akin to scripture-opening and mind-opening (24:32, 45), not divine release.⁸³⁰ However, the remaining (unglorified) disciples whose minds are unopened recognise Jesus, despite residual incredulity (24:36-51). The wayfarers' report does not include the content of Jesus' scriptural exposition (24:33-36), so Jesus reiterates this when opening the cohort's mind (24:44-47). Scripture-opening, eye-opening, and mind-opening are correlative though separate phenomena. Cognitive-perceptual restraint and release are unique to the Emmaus disciples due to Jesus' familiar appearance. Furthermore, similar perceptual/conceptual restraint occurs in Luke-Acts without any glorified-unglorified juxtaposition (e.g., 9:45; 10:21-24; 18:34).⁸³¹ Ascribing the ophthalmic idioms to passive effects of Jesus' corporeality minimises active supernatural manipulation supported by Luke's typical rhetoric of perception that involves direct divine influence.⁸³²

In summary, the text precludes incredulity or altered appearance causing unrecognition on the Emmaus road. Textual clues guide the reader to conceptualise Jesus appearing immortalised and recognisable, so an external force causes (im)perception.⁸³³ We shall see how the reader combines extratextual and intratextual data for a legitimate reading of Jesus' supernatural control as this cause.

⁸²⁹ Bovon 2002–2013, 1:371-75; D.M. Miller 2010, 503-504. Bucur's (2014, 693) construal that the disciples are drowsy and confused (Luke 9:32-33) due to glory is untenable. Drowsiness almost prevents them from seeing the glory and Peter's perplexity is a misunderstanding motif.

⁸³⁰ Bucur 2014; similarly, Spencer 2008, 211-14 (recognition through hearing and a shared meal); cf. Ambrose, *Exp. Ps. CXVIII* 3.23 (Jesus opens veiled eyes through the gospel, like at the transfiguration and Damascus road). Bucur (2014, 697-98) cites LAB 61:5-9 where Zeruel alters David's appearance, but divine control also opens Goliath's eyes.

⁸³¹ Similarly, Mann 2016b, 146-47 n. 136 (contra Bucur).

⁸³² On Luke's rhetoric of perception see Mann 2016a; 2016b.

⁸³³ Similarly, Seim 2009, 22.

6.1.2. Scholars' Inattention to Jesus' Emmaus Disappearance

With the primitive resurrection-ascension-exaltation complex expanded, the reader encounters three departures of Jesus: missing body (resurrection; Luke 24:3, 12, 23-24); Emmaus disappearance (24:31b); and ascension (24:51; Acts 1:9-10). Scholarly concentration on Jesus' Emmaus disappearance (αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἅπ' αὐτῶν) is a desideratum, treated only incidentally in research on the resurrection and ascension.⁸³⁴ Thoroughgoing investigations of ancient disappearance traditions in such research nevertheless prove useful for my devotion to the Emmaus disappearance.

An invariable list of alleged parallels (2 Macc 3:34; T. Ab. [A] 8:1; Eur., *Hel.* 605-606; *Orest.* 1494-96; Verg., *Aen.* 9.656-60) circulates unassessed among remarks on the Emmaus disappearance, some passages included based on ἄφαντος or cognates.⁸³⁵ Nonetheless, co-texts delimit comparability—Jesus dies, is missing, apparently raised, and appearing post-mortem (23:33-24:51). Jesus approaching and proceeding alongside (ἐγγίσας συνεπορεύετο, 24:15) his disciples is an epiphanic arrival⁸³⁶ forming an *inclusio* with his departure (24:31b), along with (im)perception (24:16, 31a), as part of a larger chiasm.⁸³⁷ An unmistakable Christophany occurs after the alacritous travellers rejoin the others and αὐτὸς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν, startling and frightening the cohort (24:36-37). Despite the common inference that Jesus enters through the door or walls (cf. Hom., *Od.* 6.20-24; 4.802, 838-839),⁸³⁸ sudden standing indicates an epiphany (Luke 2:9; 24:4; Acts 1:3, 10; 10:30; 11:13; 12:7; 16:9; 23:11; 27:23).⁸³⁹ This is the antithesis of his Emmaus vanishing, both without traversing barriers. Jesus 'presented himself' (παρέστησεν ἑαυτόν) and 'was seen by' (ὄπτανόμενος) his disciples for many/forty days (Acts 1:3; cf. ἐμφανῆ

⁸³⁴ E.g., Wanke 1973, 96; Alsup 1975, 196 n. 560; Dillon 1978, 74 n. 14, 153 n. 239, 171 n. 42; Zwiép 1997, 23 n. 1, 92, 161. An improvement is van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000.

⁸³⁵ E.g., Klostermann 1929, 238; Grundmann 1966, 447; Marshall 1978, 898; Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 2:1568; Danker 1988, 394; Ernst 1993, 507; Just 1993, 63 n. 18; Bock 1994/1996, 2:1920 n. 23; Baban 2006, 48, 230 n. 148; Levine and Witherington 2018, 664.

⁸³⁶ Alsup 1975, 190-200; Wolter 2016, 2:559.

⁸³⁷ See Just 1993, 64, 254-56; Green 1997, 842, 850; Parsons 2015, 349.

⁸³⁸ E.g., Litwa 2019, 23, 180-81, 184. Traversing barriers is also inevident in LEM 16:14 and John 20:19, 26 (*pace* Moore 2019, 192).

⁸³⁹ See also Dillon 1978, 185-86; Wolter 2016, 1:124-25; Chapters 2-3, *passim*.

γενέσθαι, 10:40-41; ὄφθη, 13:31), not continuously,⁸⁴⁰ but intermittently⁸⁴¹ as the Emmaus story exemplifies. Jesus' (dis)appearances may be attributable to translation,⁸⁴² but the reader discerns more congruity between his pre- and post-immortalised corporeality than critics allow. Accordingly, I shall evaluate the circulated list given these directives.

Some scholars examining the resurrection or ascension differentiate departure typologies (e.g., temporary or permanent; pre- or post-mortem),⁸⁴³ but further nuancing is needed particularly with analogues to the Emmaus disappearance. Lohfink considers 'heavenly ascent' (*Himmelfahrt*) accounts and highlights Luke's tendency to record departures concluding appearances (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33; 24:31; Acts 10:7; 12:10), determining that Luke includes the ascension to conclude Jesus' appearances, like concluding angelophanies but *formgeschichtlich* closer to end-of-life pre- or post-mortem *Entrückungen*.⁸⁴⁴ However, passive and reflexive actional roles of *Entrückungen* and departures concluding epiphanies (respectively) conflict. Similarly, Cook's Emmaus disappearance analogies include assorted reflexive and passive typologies.⁸⁴⁵ MacDonald likens Romulus' post-translation disappearance (Livy 1.16) to Jesus' ascension, referencing early Christian comments (Tertullian,

⁸⁴⁰ Pace Cadbury 1925, 219.

⁸⁴¹ Nothing in Luke 24 suggests more than a day between resurrection and ascension (cf. temporal markers: 24:1, 13, 33, 36, 50; also Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:193-95, 2:1560); likewise LEM; unlike Matthew (travel to Galilee: 28:9-11, 16-17) or John (delays: 20:19, 26; 21:1 [implicit]). Luke may have learned the forty-day tradition after composing his Gospel (Benoit 1973-1974, 1:242). Alternatively, Gaventa (2003, 64) attributes the discrepancy to Acts 1 emphasising Jesus' community whilst imagining a protraction and expansion of Luke 24 (focusing on Jesus). Forty may be a round number (van der Horst 1983, 19) or theological device (cf. Luke 4:2; Nolland 1989-1993, 3:1225); Maile (1986, 48-54) surveys views.

⁸⁴² Bock 1994/1996, 2:1933-34; Zwiep 1997, 161; van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000, 196-97; Litwa 2014, 169; Miller 2015, 164-66, 173.

⁸⁴³ Bickermann 1924; Schmitt 1976; Segal 1980; Tabor 1986, 69-95; 1989; van Tilborg and Chatelion Counet 2000, 193-94, 208-231; Yarbrow Collins 2012; Miller 2015, 35, *passim*.

⁸⁴⁴ Lohfink 1971, 32-79, 150-51; followed by Zwiep 2001, 328-34; cf. van der Horst 1983, 21-22; Wallace 2016. Yet, *Entrückung* is defamiliarised with Jesus already fully immortalised (cf. John 20:17 [Jesus must depart, not semi-transformed]). Parsons' (1987, 59-61) objections that Lukan departures are inconsistent (Luke 1:11-22; 24:7-9; Acts 1:11-12; 5:19; 8:26; 12:23) unrealistically demands ubiquitous pellucidity, and that similar terminology describes mortals departing (ἀπέρχομαι, ἀφίστημι, χωρίζω [including compounds]: Luke 1:23; 5:16; 7:24; 10:30; Acts 9:17; 28:29) ignores a supernatural-natural semantic difference (e.g., disappearing versus walking); identical terminology exposes limitations of lexical markers.

⁸⁴⁵ Cook 2018, 608, cf. 170-71, 247-321, 322-412; e.g., Pelops' post-assumption vanishing (ἄφαντος ἐπελες) refers to divine dismemberment and consumption (Pindar, *Ol.* 1.46, cf. 40-51; Ps.-Apollod., *Epit.* 2.3).

Apol. 12.23; Arnobius, *Ag. Nat.* 6.1.41), but these pertain to Romulus' initial disappearance.⁸⁴⁶ If Jesus' resurrection/ascension is an *Entrückung*, what disappearance type concludes periodic Christophanies? At least Wright comments that the Emmaus disappearance is no rapture since Jesus reappears.⁸⁴⁷

Alsup speaks of a 'disappearance motif' for heavenly return concluding OT-Jewish theophanies (following Lohfink), occurring in five of his seven passages (Gen 18:33; Jdg 6:21; 13:20; Tob 12:20-21; T. Ab. [E] [B] 4:4/[A] 4:5; 8:1).⁸⁴⁸ His Graeco-Roman appearance *Gattung* includes Apollonius, Romulus, Aristeas, Cleomedes, Alcmene, Peregrinus Proteus, Demainete, and two youths,⁸⁴⁹ but only Romulus and Aristeas accounts record concluding disappearances, and he omits Peisistratus of Orchomenus. For Alsup, this Graeco-Roman *Gattung*, including the missing body element, explains relocation and continued existence (unlike OT-Jewish theophanies) whereas Jesus' Emmaus disappearance concludes a recognition-scene consistent with Jewish traditions.⁸⁵⁰ However, this impression of either Graeco-Roman or Jewish influence is unrealistic. Although Jewish antiquity lacks post-translation appearances,⁸⁵¹ OT-Jewish theophanic and Graeco-Roman post-translation disappearances are closer related to each other and to Jesus' Emmaus disappearance than to missing body disappearances (i.e., *Entrückungen*).

Catchpole proposes that Luke reshapes an earlier Emmaus story depicting an angelic Jesus, containing an 'ascent motif' of angelic travellers (Gen 18) or visitors (17:22; 35:13; Jdg 6:19-22; 13:20), particularly modelled after Raphael (Tob 5-12).⁸⁵² For Catchpole, Luke also adds the ascension using this motif as an end-of-life

⁸⁴⁶ MacDonald 2015c, 136-37.

⁸⁴⁷ Wright 2003, 703 (contra Schillebeeckx 1979, 341).

⁸⁴⁸ Alsup 1975, 246-64. Despite Parsons' (1987, 52) critique that Luke 24:50-53 does not draw formal characteristics from OT-Jewish theophanies given inconsistent endings, variation is inevitable and the theophanic figures' departures are more crucial than witnesses' following actions. The OT-Jewish theophanic departure at least remains a plausible antecedent for the Emmaus disappearance.

⁸⁴⁹ Alsup 1975, 214-39. Ascribing post-translation disappearance to a (so-called) 'θεῖος ἀνὴρ' ability is tenuous (*pace* Ehrhardt 1963, 183-85; Alsup 1975; Pervo 1987, 71; Fuller 1980, 106; Baban 2006, 48, 230 n. 148, cf. 162) (see §1.2).

⁸⁵⁰ Alsup 1975, 238-41, 271.

⁸⁵¹ Zwiep 1997, 159.

⁸⁵² Catchpole 2000, 85-135. Harris (1928, 319) relates Raphael's departure to Jesus' ascension.

departure (e.g., Enoch: Gen 5:24), chiefly invoking Elijaianic tradition (Luke 9:1-51; 2 Kgs 2:1-15; Sir 48:9).⁸⁵³ Thus, he identifies this motif operational for both Jesus' Emmaus disappearance and ascension, proposing different intertextual phenomena—Raphael's epiphanic conclusion and Elijah's life-conclusion. However, differing reflexive and passive actional roles are significant.

The resurrection-ascension-exaltation complex elicits scholarly construals of Jesus' Emmaus departure and ascension as equivalent. Jesus' consecutive appearance in Luke 24:36-53 is patterned on 24:13-35,⁸⁵⁴ but Zwiép says that the *lectio brevior* of 24:51 (διέστη ἀπ' αὐτῶν)⁸⁵⁵ is analogous to the Emmaus disappearance, so Jesus suddenly vanishes during his ascension, though καὶ ἀνεφέρετο [εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν] could be a καί-*epexegeticum* explaining a passive and gradual *Entrückung*.⁸⁵⁶ In this vein, he interprets the nebular vehicle in Acts 1:9 suddenly concealing Jesus, taking him away.⁸⁵⁷ Walton comments that the cloud's elevation and obscurity do not add much to Jesus' Emmaus disappearance and reappearance, but also says that passives in Acts 1:9-11 indicate God's agency of Jesus' resurrection and ascension.⁸⁵⁸ A passive, gradual ascension is unmistakable with the disciples 'watching' (βλεπόντων) and 'gazing' (ἀτενίζοντες) whilst Jesus is 'lifted up' (ἐπήρθη), a cloud 'receives' (ὑπέλαβεν) him, and he 'proceeds on' (πορευομένου) (1:9-10).⁸⁵⁹ Luke 24:51 is the same final assumption narrated in Acts 1:9-11, different than the Emmaus disappearance.⁸⁶⁰

Luke 24:31b (καὶ αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν) also lends to a reflexive vanishing consistent with concluding epiphanies rather than passive ascent. The pronoun αὐτός is the expressed emphatic subject of ἐγένετο, conveying self-affected

⁸⁵³ Catchpole 2000, 128-29. Litwak (2005, 147-51) is confident of an Elijaianic echo. Parsons (1987, 136-40) concludes that antique assumption stories shaped the Lukan ascension, mostly Elijaianic traditions, though lacking contact with Graeco-Roman traditions (cf. δίσταμαι/δίστημι: Luke 24:51; ἀναλαμβάνομαι: Acts 1:2, 11, 22; ἐπαίρομαι: 1:9; πορεύομαι: 1:10-11).

⁸⁵⁴ Foakes-Jackson 1931, 5.

⁸⁵⁵ For a defence of the *lectio longior* see Metzger 1994, 162-63.

⁸⁵⁶ Zwiép 1997, 92-93 (noting the imperfect ἀνεφέρετο with parallel to Acts 1:10).

⁸⁵⁷ Zwiép 1997, 103-106.

⁸⁵⁸ Walton 2018, 135-36.

⁸⁵⁹ Lohfink (1971, 75) notes gradual ascension.

⁸⁶⁰ With Dillon 1978, 171 n. 42; similarly, Pervo 2009, 45-46; contra Michaelis 1944, 89-91; Schubert 1957, 168 n. 13; Ellis 1966, 279.

intransitive but transformative action or middle-passive semantic force, so *Jesus himself* becomes ἄφαντος.⁸⁶¹ Luke-Acts uses other terminology for passive removal, such as with the resurrection-ascension-exaltation complex⁸⁶² or Philip’s relocation (ἀρπάζω, Acts 8:39).⁸⁶³ Jesus enters a dwelling (Luke 24:29), so interpreting a vanishing-ascension is awkward, and there is no hint of directionality, motion, or fading (cf. a phantom gliding away, Hom., *Od.* 4.838-41). The reader may interpret vanishing as figurative or symbolic,⁸⁶⁴ but not at the expense of a literal departure; it is not idiomatic for ‘disappearing’ out of sight (cf. *Od.* 10.250-60). Reading invisibility is untenable.⁸⁶⁵ The adjective ἄφαντος is not adverbial conveying unseen or unnoticed departure.⁸⁶⁶ The qualification ἀπ’ αὐτῶν (not αὐτοῖς) indicates physical withdrawal, not undetectability.⁸⁶⁷ “We are to understand disappearance without physical locomotion,” Plummer states, but adds, “The ἀπ’ αὐτῶν implies no more than withdrawal from their sight: to what extent His presence was withdrawn we have

⁸⁶¹ Ἄφαντος is indeterminate of actional role; cf. *Diatessaron* 53:58 and Peshitta traditions describe Jesus being taken away or borne up. Buxton (2009, 23, 169-77, *passim*) expatiates on γί[γ]νομαι signifying Graeco-Roman divine self-transformation. Nevertheless, γί[γ]νομαι occurs in different grammatical voices with disappearance terminology for reflexive and passive departures, e.g.: middle for reflexive disappearance (Pseudo-Plutarch, *De fluviis* 4.3; Apoc. Mos. 20:3b; 2 Macc 3:34; T. Ab. [A] 8:1; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.333); middle for assumption (Eur., *Orest.* 1495-96; Paus. 9.19.4 [passive participle of disappearance]; participles and infinitives: Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 3.1.1; Dion. Hal., *Ant. rom.* 2.56.2; Arrian, *Anab.* 7.27.3; Diod. Sic. 3.60.3; 4.58.6; 4.82.6; Plutarch, *Rom.* 5.4; 27.6; 28.6; *Num.* 2.2); passive for assumption (Diod. Sic. 5.51.4); active for passive disappearance (Lucian, *Syr. d.* 4 [pluperfect]; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.28 [perfect]); cf. passive for reflexive disappearance (Hdt. 4.15.3; Diod. Sic. 5.51.4; Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5) and passive assumption (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.28). Aspects of inflection require certain grammatical voices. Variation does not undermine reflexivity in Luke 24:31b.

⁸⁶² Resurrection: Acts 2:24 (ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἀνέστησεν), 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40-41; 13:30, 33-34, 37; 17:3, 31; 26:8 (implied), 23; ascension: Luke 24:51 (ἀνεφέρετο); Acts 1:2 (ἀνελήμφθη; cf. ἀνάλημψις; Luke 9:51); Acts 1:9 (ἐπήρθη καὶ νεφέλη ὑπέλαβεν αὐτόν), 22, but 10-11 (πορευομένου); exaltation: 2:33; 5:31; complex: 2:36; 3:21; see also van Tilborg and Chatelion *Counet* 2000, 191; Talbert 1992, 20; cf. actives expressing reflexive resurrection: ἀναστᾶς (LEM 16:9; see Kelhoffer 2000, 54, 67-68, 268); ἀναστήναι (John 20:9); ἀνέστησεν ἑαυτὸν (Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 2:1).

⁸⁶³ Jesus’ and Philip’s departures correspond (Nolland 1989–1993, 3:1206; Edwards 2015, 724), but as conclusions in a broader shared structural pattern, not as a typology (Matthews 2002, 85-86 n. 49) (see §8.1.4).

⁸⁶⁴ E.g., Jesus’ new eucharistic presence (Just 1993, 260-61; Brawley 1990a; 2020, 206). Despite reception as ethical or theological pedagogies, NT resurrection appearances stories were not penned as historicised allegories (Wright 2003, 598-99).

⁸⁶⁵ Contra C.F. Evans 1990, 913-14.

⁸⁶⁶ With Plummer 1922, 557; contra Denaux 2010, 295 n. 60.

⁸⁶⁷ Van Oosterzee 1868, 392; Bruce 1897, 648; Culy et al 2010, 752 (ἀπ’ αὐτῶν connoting “Separation,” but translating ἄφαντος as “invisible”); cf. Triton plunges into the sea becoming unseen (ἄφαντος αὐτῷ [dative]... ἐπλετο, Apoll. Rhod. 4.1590-91).

no means of knowing”.⁸⁶⁸ However, Luke frequently applies ἀπ’ αὐτῶν in departures concluding appearances (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33; Acts 1:9, 11, 22; 12:10; cf. 10:7).⁸⁶⁹ Furthermore, subsequent *epiphaneia* (Luke 24:36) implies *aphaneia*. Whereas passive assumption typologies parallel the resurrection-ascension-exaltation complex, sudden reflexive disappearances concluding epiphanies (§§2.1.3; 3.1.3) best explain the Emmaus disappearance.

6.2. Readings of Ancient Mediterranean Elusiveness in the Emmaus Episode

6.2.1. Jesus the Unrecognised Divine Visitor

Luke’s reader detects theoxenic elements (§§2.1.1; 3.1.1) throughout the Emmaus story.⁸⁷⁰

- Jesus arrives as a ‘sojourner’ and engages disciples who should recognise him (Luke 24:13-17);
- he tests their faith and understanding by questioning and enlightening them about himself, feigning ignorance (asking, ‘What things?’ [ποῖα;]) then explaining the scriptures (24:17-27 [19]);
- ‘he pretended to proceed farther’ (αὐτὸς προσεποιήσατο πορρώτερον πορεύεσθαι), but accepts hospitality when they ‘prevailed upon’ (παρεβιάσαντο)⁸⁷¹ him, so he ‘entered’ (εἰσηλθεν, 24:29) a dwelling to lodge and share a meal (24:28-30);
- he is recognised by a distinctive action (24:30-31a);⁸⁷²
- he phenomenally departs (24:31b);
- his hosts are blessed with encouragement, improved understanding, and faith (24:32-35);⁸⁷³

⁸⁶⁸ Plummer 1922, 557; similarly, Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 2:1568.

⁸⁶⁹ Lohfink 1971, 170-71.

⁸⁷⁰ See McBride 1991; Denaux 1999, 274-75; Byrne 2000, 186-93; Jipp 2013, 194-204, 234-35; cf. Gunkel 1903, 71; Bultmann 1963, 286; Grundmann 1966, 443; Larsen 2008, 56-57 (Tob 5-12).

⁸⁷¹ Cf. Gen 18:3; 19:2; Acts 16:15.

⁸⁷² Fitzmyer (1970/1985, 2:1568) observes, “Though he is the guest, he assumes the role of the host or *paterfamilias*”.

⁸⁷³ Like Abraham prevailing upon divine visitors to remain and being blessed with a son (Gen 18:3, 10), Jesus’ disciples urge him to remain and are blessed with revelation (Letellier 1995, 85). The disciples treating the protagonist as an ignorant sojourner (παροικεῖς... οὐκ ἔγνωσ, 24:18) and

- and their expression of his impact and their immediacy of return (αὐτῆ τῆ ὥρᾳ, 24:33) imply amazement (24:32-35).⁸⁷⁴

This theoxenic trope affects the reader. Ambiguity surrounding Jesus' missing body builds suspense for the reader who is uninformed about his status, other than his alleged resurrection, as anticipated (24:1-12).⁸⁷⁵ Suspense diminishes when αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς joins the travellers (24:15), instead of the reader realising the sojourner's identity with them.⁸⁷⁶ This privileged information enables the reader to distance from the ἀνόητοι disciples (24:25). Incapability of communicating truths to them reproduces suspense.⁸⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the reader is not provided details of Jesus' scriptural elucidation given to the disciples.⁸⁷⁸

A Wisdom-visitation allusion may be subtle. Brown comments on Wisdom's hospitality, "It is perhaps no coincidence that... Jesus' discourse to the two disciples moves through comparable pedagogical stages as Wisdom does in Prov. 1-9: rebuke (Luke 24:25), instruction (v. 27), and host (v. 30)".⁸⁷⁹ Ἀνόητοι contrasts with wisdom and faith (24:25). Moreover, Wisdom visits as a disguised stranger, testing the one who seeks, loves, and embraces her (Sir 4:11-19 [4:17 Hebrew]).⁸⁸⁰

The theoxenic trope in the Emmaus story is defamiliarised. Firstly, it is structured in terms of Luke's journey motif,⁸⁸¹ predominately taking place on a road with concentrated *Reisenotizen*: πορεύομαι (Luke 24:13, 15, 28 [x2]), ὁδός (24:32, 35), ἐγγίζω (24:15, 28), and δεῖ (24:26, 44).⁸⁸² Journeying comprises more narrative space (24:13-27) than accommodation (24:28-31). Secondly, Jesus is undisguised.

explaining events (24:19-24) to him who characterises them as foolish (ἀνόητοι, 24:25) and interprets the scriptures (24:26-27) creates irony (Kurz 1993, 143-44; Dinkler 2017b, 701-705).

⁸⁷⁴ Amazed characters infer departing incognito visitors' divinity: Hom., *Od.* 1.322-24; 3.371-74; Verg., *Aen.* 9.659; Jdg 6:22-23; 13:20-23.

⁸⁷⁵ Messianic suffering does not surprise the reader (contra Strauss 1995, 257).

⁸⁷⁶ Similarly, Grundmann 1966, 445. Cf. 'Raphael'/'the angel' rather than 'Azariah' (Tob 5-12; see Moore 1996, 183).

⁸⁷⁷ See Chatman 1978, 59-60.

⁸⁷⁸ Seim 2002, 162.

⁸⁷⁹ Brown 2014, 53 n. 63.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. ἐμπιστεύση, Sir 4:16; πιστεύειν, Luke 24:25.

⁸⁸¹ Dillon 1978, 238-49 (compatibility with Lukan hospitality); Robinson 1984 (converging motifs: journey, prophetic fulfilment, recognition, and hospitality).

⁸⁸² See Gill 1970; Dillon 1978, 89-90, 145; Karris 1987; Baban 2006, 186-94.

Disguise is more compatible with theoxenies, but diverges from post-translation epiphanies. According to Betz, Jesus appears not as an anthropomorphic deity, but a post-mortem human like Aristeas, Zalmoxis, Peregrinus, Apollonius, and Romulus.⁸⁸³ However, translated humans are normally recognisable or reveal themselves without delay, and appear without theoxenic contexts (except the Dioscuri; §§2.1.1; 2.1.3). Nevertheless, like incognito figures modifying conduct, Jesus speaks about himself as a presumed stranger—a somewhat deceitful though non-malicious comportment—maintaining unrecognition, so that his disciples’ understanding improves whilst encountering the resurrected Messiah. Thirdly, Luke’s inclusion of cognitive-perceptual restraint and release specifies an operative factor other than altered appearance, differing (without detracting) from the theoxenic trope.⁸⁸⁴ Negated (ἐπι)γινώσκω occurs in Luke-Acts for lack of knowledge, without manner or causation indicated (Luke 2:43; 8:17; 12:48; 24:18; Acts 19:35; 27:39; cf. ἀγνοέω, 13:27; 17:23), but details of an external force accompany the Emmaus account statements (Luke 24:16, 31a) and Jesus’ passion prediction (18:34; cf. ἀγνοέω, 9:45).

MacDonald suggests imitation of disguised Odysseus deceiving and testing Laertes (Hom., *Od.* 24.216-361; cf. ἐπιγνώη; ὀφθαλμοῖσιν), since Odysseus and Jesus are presumed dead, but come unrecognised to question sorrowful loved ones who recount recent tragedies, followed by recognition-scenes involving meals and reversed roles of host and guest.⁸⁸⁵ However, unlike Odysseus explicitly lying, Jesus is neither asked about his identity nor claims to be someone else. Odysseus’ unrecognition involves metamorphosis and prolonged separation, but Jesus does not assume a guise and his disciples would recognise him without restrained perception. Odysseus offers his scar and tree-planting experience to dispel Laertes’ scepticism (24.327-44) whereas Jesus reveals himself by breaking bread and restoration of the disciples’ perception. Jesus later presents his limbs, but to the sceptical cohort to prove he is no πνεῦμα (Luke 24:36-43). Laertes’ knees and heart loosen (λύτο... ἦτορ, Hom., *Od.* 24.345) upon recognising Odysseus, but the Emmaus disciples’

⁸⁸³ Betz 1969, 33-34 (contra Gunkel 1903, 71 [divine-wanderer trope]); preceded by Ehrhardt (1963; 1964) finding the Romulus-legend closest.

⁸⁸⁴ Similarly, Wolter 2016, 2:549-50 (mostly incredulity).

⁸⁸⁵ For this discussion see MacDonald 2015a, 320-21.

hearts burn (καρδία... καιομένη, Luke 24:32) whilst Jesus is unrecognisable.⁸⁸⁶

Luke's cognitive-perceptual manipulation and concluding disappearance motifs are unparalleled in this Homeric account. Nonetheless, Jesus behaves surreptitiously and tests his disciples by sustaining unrecognition. Whitaker rightly regards the Emmaus story as a hospitality episode without metamorphosis, but he interprets God withholding perception and determines that Jesus is depicted as a returning disguised hero (like Odysseus) more than an unrecognisable god (like Athene).⁸⁸⁷ However, the reader attributing these abilities of cognitive-perceptual control and disappearance to Jesus sees him as more theomorphic than a returning hero.

Litwa finds comparability to disguised god stories (Ovid, *Metam.* 8.610-724; Sil. It. 7.162-211) and sees divine causality for the (im)perception congruent with Paul's and his companions' differing experiences on the Damascus road (Acts 9:7; 22:9) as well as the divine ability to allow [selective] recognition (Hom., *Od.* 10.573-74; 16.161; mists or tokens: 10.274-83; *Il.* 1.199-200; 3.396-97).⁸⁸⁸ Against deducing a mist motif is Luke's explicit application elsewhere, namely when Paul pronounces that Bar-Jesus/Elymas will be τυφλός by ἀχλύς καὶ σκότος falling upon him (Acts 13:11), an account more consonant with mist/darkness for perceptual inhibition.⁸⁸⁹ Although reading disguise or a mist in the Emmaus story is problematic, divine allowance of recognition (i.e., supernatural control) is plausible.⁸⁹⁰

Jesus is not disguised, but his enigmatic conduct and private revelation (Acts 10:41) are consonant with pre-mortem elusiveness. He privately explains teachings (τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ)⁸⁹¹ to disciples whereas others fail to understand (Luke 8:4-18).⁸⁹² He only permits Peter, James, and John to enter Jairus' house (8:51), perhaps due to spatial limitations, but probably desiring privacy since a crowd

⁸⁸⁶ The disciples' response is inimitable (Kiffiak 2017, 279).

⁸⁸⁷ Whitaker 2019, 174-82.

⁸⁸⁸ Litwa 2019, 180-81.

⁸⁸⁹ See §8.1.3.

⁸⁹⁰ See §6.2.2; Chapter 7.

⁸⁹¹ Cf. private revelation or disclosure (Tob 12:6; μυστήριον: Dan 2; Jdt 2:2).

⁸⁹² The 'parable theory' (Jesus explicates mysteries to insiders whilst outsiders' incomprehension exacerbates unbelief) is inconsistent since disciples are also uncomprehending (Räsänen 1990, 76-143).

follows (8:40-50)⁸⁹³ and he enjoins silence after healing (8:56). Enjoining silence (4:33-37, 41 [cf. 8:28]; 9:18-22 [cf. 9:36, 42-45]; 18:35-43; without reference to identity: 5:12-17; 8:40-56) mitigates excessive attention that could lead to untimely death, a realistic jeopardy for supposed messianic figures or pretenders (cf. Acts 5:36-37).⁸⁹⁴ According to Green, Jesus' concern is not inaccurate nationalistic ideologies of messiahship, but the disciples' partial conception whilst progressively revealing the Messiah's multifaceted mission (including suffering).⁸⁹⁵ Nevertheless, silence is not to maintain a *Geheimnis*, but mitigates opposition, delaying suffering. Jesus likewise only takes three disciples to witness his transfiguration (Luke 9:28).⁸⁹⁶ He confidentially predicts his passion (9:34b-44; 18:31-34) and 'privately' (κατ' ἰδίαν, 10:23) refers to disciples as privileged witnesses (10:24),⁸⁹⁷ later disclosing eschatological details to them (21:7-36). Finally, Jesus privately reveals himself revived, only permitting his disciples' comprehension (24:1-53). Irrespective of a *Leidensgeheimnis*, Jesus' pre- and post-mortem privacy maintains elusiveness.⁸⁹⁸

Ultimately, the reader observes a defamiliarised theoxenic trope as the immortalised Messiah appears privately with unrecognition due to supernatural imposition, not disguise. Jesus' elusiveness continues to induce character and reader curiosity about a theomorphic Christology, indicating his supramundane identity as a divine visitor.

6.2.2. Jesus the Controller: Reading Supernatural Control of (Im)perception

The reader conceptualises Jesus' cognitive-perceptual manipulation, consonant with supernatural control abilities of ancient Mediterranean supramundane figures, though defamiliarised (§§2.1.5; 3.1.8). Homeric gods frequently exercise

⁸⁹³ Cf. Acts 9:40-42.

⁸⁹⁴ On purported Messiahs see Swain 1944; Horsley 1984; Tabor 2003.

⁸⁹⁵ Green 1997, 224, 370; *pace* Morris 1988, 130, 135.

⁸⁹⁶ Luke 9:1-34 parallels Acts 1:1-12 with the transfiguration prefiguring the ascension (Davies 1955), both involving limited, apostolic witness.

⁸⁹⁷ Cf. leaders meeting privately (κατὰ + ἴδιος, 2 Macc 14:21).

⁸⁹⁸ Origen describes Jesus (pre- and post-mortem) as selectively polymorphic, hidden, and private (though possessing an intermediate resurrected body) whose private resurrection appearances are consistent with permitting select witness (e.g., transfiguration) and understanding (e.g., parables), or being diversely perceived (e.g., Judas indicating him) (*Cels.* 2.62-66). Jesus was sent to be known, but remained concealed, only partially known by those who knew him best (2.67).

emotional and cognitive manipulation (Hom., *Od.* 1.347-49; 17.360-63, 437-39; 18.158-60; 23.10-14), inducing blindness of heart resulting in perceptual distortion (15.231-34; 19.478-79) and overruling human volition (3.269; 4.380; 18.155-56; 23.353). However, Luke's reader notes the absence of a mist motif, as when Athene lifts a mist from Diomedes' eyes to discern gods from mortals (*Il.* 5.127-28). Divine supernatural control of mortals occurs during theoxenic episodes (*Od.* 1.320-22; 2.392-98; 3.75; 20.345-46, 350-59; Eur., *Bacch.* 32-42, 114-19, 298-305, 616-22, 850-53, 1114-28, 1139-43, 1169-1215; cf. 665, 977-79, 1229). Athene prevents Penelope from recognising Odysseus (Hom., *Od.* 19.478-79; 23.11-14). The goddess also envelops Odysseus with mists to prevent interrogation (7.14-17, 37-42, 139-45) and recognition (13.189-93), but these are poured around him (cf. 23.371-72) rather than altering others' senses. Jesus is unaffected, but his disciples are directly manipulated. The elusive Dionysus controls his surroundings to avoid capture (Eur., *Bacch.* 434-42, 498, 515-18), release his followers (443-50), and accomplish his purposes (1388-92). Jesus' presence accompanied by distortions is not unprecedented—Dionysus' presence brings wonders (Eur., *Bacch.* 449-50) and illusions (614-22).

Most notably in Jewish traditions, Yahweh sovereignly controls thoughts and speech (1 Kgs 22:19-23; cf. 2 Chron 18:18-22; 3 Bar. 3:8), physical being (Jos. *Asen.* 27:8), circumstances (Artapanus, *fr.* 3 in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.27.23), and angels (1 En. 14:18-25). Although Satan and demons (and angels) exhibit emotional or cognitive control, the Emmaus narrative does not evince Satanic or demonic agency.⁸⁹⁹ The disciples are not literally blinded like men at Sodom (Gen 19:11)⁹⁰⁰ or the Egyptians (Wis 19:13-17), but experience cognitive-perceptual inhibition like the Arameans prevented from recognising Elisha (2 Kgs 6:18; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.56-57 [mist]). The eye-opening idiom (the antithesis) occurs with slightly differing expressions in accounts of Hagar (ἀνοίγω + ὀφθαλμός + ὀράω, Gen 21:19), Balaam (ἀποκαλύπτω + ὀφθαλμός + ὀράω, Num 22:31; cf. 24:4, 16), Elisha's servant (διανοίγω + ὀφθαλμός + ὀράω, 2 Kgs 6:17), and the Arameans (ἀνοίγω + διανοίγω + ὀφθαλμός + ὀράω, 6:20).⁹⁰¹ Both cognitive-perceptual restraint and eye-opening

⁸⁹⁹ Contra Nolland and Eckey (see n. 98). Cf. 2 Cor 4:4 (but pertaining to the gospel).

⁹⁰⁰ Pace Robinson 1984, 485 (intertext for Luke 24:16).

⁹⁰¹ Wanke (1973, 36-37) notes these and 3 Macc 5:27-28.

occur by divine causality in 2 Kgs 6:17-20. In Tobit, Fitzmyer identifies ἀνεωχθήσονται (11:7 G^{II}) as a ‘theological passive’ (cf. ἀνοίξει, G^I) with God opening Tobit’s ὀφθαλμοί.⁹⁰² This comports with stress on angelic mediation and praise for God’s works (12:18, 22). Although Jesus’ disciples are not literally blinded, implied externally restored perception is analogous. Unlike Raphael, Jesus does not attribute restoration to God. Luke 24:31a uses the eye-opening idiom (διανοίγω + ὀφθαλμός) with a verb of recognition (ἐπιγινώσκω) rather than sight (ὁράω) since the disciples see Jesus, but are unable to perceive his identity.⁹⁰³ The closest lexical parallel is Adam and Eve whose eyes are opened and realise their nakedness, knowing good and evil (διανοίγω + ὀφθαλμός + γινώσκω, Gen 3:5, 7; cf. Apoc. Mos. 20:2, 5).⁹⁰⁴ However, consumption of the forbidden fruit causes revelation and explicit cognitive-perceptual restraint is lacking. Ortlund suggests the Emmaus story as an antithetical and eschatological parallel, but offers unconvincing imperception correspondences (the serpent’s unknown identity).⁹⁰⁵ Bucur’s solution paralleling Adam and Eve’s realisation of *their own* nakedness (*a state/quality*)—unclothed of glory—with the disciples’ recognition of Jesus (*another person*) is unsatisfactory.⁹⁰⁶

An unstated subject controls the disciples’ eyes (the object). In ancient Jewish accounts with κρατέω and ὀφθαλμός in proximity, eyes are not the object grasped, but the object by which the subject grasps (e.g., Ezek 7:13; Josephus, *J.W.* 7.321). Scholars repeat the suggestion that the rabbinic construction עֵינַי + עָרַב is a ‘*zauberisches Augenblendwerk*’.⁹⁰⁷ However, rabbinic traditions speak of those who ‘hold the eyes’ (עֵינַי + עָרַב) as illusionists not guilty of forbidden acts (Lev 19:26; Deut 18:9-10), unlike those actually performing them (m. Sanh. 7.11; t. Shabb. 8.6; Sifra Qod. 6.2 [on Lev 19:26]; Sifre Deut. 171 [on Deut 18:10]; b. Sanh. 65b; 67b; 68a; y. Sanh. 41a; cf. b. Hul. 57a; Sifre Deut. 170 [on Deut 18:9]; b. Shabb. 75a;

⁹⁰² Fitzmyer 2003, 276, cf. 281.

⁹⁰³ Cf. κρύπτω + ὀφθαλμός (indirect object) + γινώσκω (Luke 19:42).

⁹⁰⁴ This has been long noted: Meyer 1884, 580 n. 3; Plummer 1922, 557; Wanke 1973, 36; Johnson 1991, 397; already, Augustine, *Gen. litt.* 11.31.41. Others offer thorough correspondences: Thévenot 1980; Just 1993, 66-67; Wright 2003, 652.

⁹⁰⁵ Ortlund 2010, 724-28.

⁹⁰⁶ Bucur 2014, 698-702.

⁹⁰⁷ Str-B 2:271-73; followed by, e.g.: Klostermann 1929, 235; Grundmann 1966, 445; Edwards 2015, 716 n. 60; Wolter 2016, 2:550.

Abod. Zar. 18a; 43b).⁹⁰⁸ This figurative expression for holding attention by natural means actually differs from prohibited supernatural activity.

The Seven Sages of Greece (ca. seventh–sixth century BCE) urge prudent spectating in lists of pithy sapiential imperatives, commanding, ‘Control [your] eyes!’ (Ὁφθαλμῶν κράτει, *Sententiae* 15, *FPG* 1:215; Ὁφθαλμοῦ κράτει, *Praecepta* 39, *FPG* 1:217).⁹⁰⁹ In Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*, Chloe cries: ‘she could not control her eyes’ (τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν οὐκ ἐκράτει, 1.13.5). More relevant is 3 Macc 5:27 employing κρατέω for divine cognitive inhibition where Ptolemy, ἀγνωσίᾳ κεκρατημένος, cannot remember his plans. Significant though overlooked conceptual parallels are Athene manipulating Ajax’s eyes to see Atreidae as animals or not to recognise Odysseus, since gods can contrive anything (Sophocles, *Aj.* 42-86; cf. 14-15).

Hamm iterates how Jesus is both the enabler and object of literal and spiritual vision throughout Luke’s Gospel, but attributes the disciples’ (im)perception of Jesus’ resurrection to God, followed by Jesus opening the scriptures and their minds to understand suffering.⁹¹⁰ Thus, Hamm sees both God and Jesus exercising control in Luke 24. However, throughout these narratives emphasis is on Jesus with perspicuous exhibitions of his control. Importation of other contributing agents is excessive and complicates readings of the narrative gaps (24:16, 31a). If the reader first attributes (im)perception to God, Jesus’ control in the co-text and reputation for control elsewhere compel modifying interpretation.

Jesus permits and impedes perception elsewhere. Proclaimed ‘recovery of sight to the blind’ (τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν: Luke 4:18 quoting Isa 61:1) includes literal and spiritual blindness which he heals (7:21-22; 18:35-43; cf. 6:39).⁹¹¹ He will heal Paul’s spiritual blindness only after inducing and alleviating literal blindness, then will send him to Gentiles ἀνοῖξαι ὀφθαλμοῦς αὐτῶν (Acts 9:1-18; 22:3-16; 26:18).⁹¹² Paul also mediates literal blinding of Elymas for spiritual blindness by the Lord’s

⁹⁰⁸ Frenschkowski 1995/1997, 2:239-40.

⁹⁰⁹ Cf. Mullach’s (*FPG* 1:215.15; 1:217.39) Latin renderings as *Oculis moderare*.

⁹¹⁰ Hamm 1986, 474-75.

⁹¹¹ Hamm 1986; Parsons 2015, 81.

⁹¹² See Chapter 7.

hand (13:9-11).⁹¹³ Reading Jesus, ὁ κύριος (Luke 24:34), as affecting the disciples' cognition will be mutually illuminating with ὁ κύριος opening (διήνοιξεν) Lydia's heart (Acts 16:14).⁹¹⁴ Jesus' presence correlates with (im)perception in the Emmaus account as cognitive-perceptual restraint and release are respectively conjunctive with his arrival (Luke 24:15-16) and departure (24:31), forming an *inclusio*.⁹¹⁵ Although the disciples are the subjects of recognition (ἐπέγνωσαν, 24:31a), Bovon astutely observes that the passive ἐγνώσθη in 24:35 "must be given the value of an intransitive," rendering it "'He had made himself known' or 'recognised'".⁹¹⁶ Recognition occurs only by Jesus' prerogative and causality.

Textual directives indicate Jesus' active control of cognition on the road, a reading upholding co-textual consistency. The disciples supposed that the kingdom would appear immediately, especially approaching Jerusalem (Luke 19:11), and that the Messiah Jesus would redeem Israel (24:21; cf. 16:16; 17:20; 23:51). Despite utterances already in the infancy narrative about Jesus' redemptive role (1:68; 2:38), it remained imperceptible to those nearest him, even after his resurrection. Although Jesus accuses the Emmaus disciples of failing to believe prophetic declarations and rhetorically asks about necessary messianic tasks (24:25-27), these cryptic disclosures and his scriptural elucidation are revelatory. They acknowledge their emotional reaction whilst (ὡς) Jesus speaks (despite about matters inculcated during his ministry), opening the scriptures to them (διήνοιγεν... τὰς γραφάς, 24:32; cf. 24:25-27).⁹¹⁷ Recognising him revived (24:31a), they join the others and begin deciphering his message, but he reappears (24:33-44) and opens their mind to

⁹¹³ See §8.1.3.

⁹¹⁴ Also Dupont 1953, 365-66 n. 46. Παραβιάζομαι ('prevail upon'/'urge') only in Luke 24:29 and Acts 16:15 in the NT strengthens this link (cf. Tannehill 1986/1990, 2:207 n. 1). Rowe (2006, 109 n. 103) notes Acts 16:14 among ambiguous κύριος instances, possibly Jesus. Ἰησοῦς + ὁ κύριος (Luke 24:3) followed by interchange (24:15, 19, 34) indicates lordship continuity (cf. Acts 1:11, 14, 16, 21; 2:6, 21) (Rowe 2006, 182-89, 205-207).

⁹¹⁵ See n. 837. Imperfect ἐκρατοῦντο (24:16) then aorists διηνοίχθησαν and ἐπέγνωσαν (24:31a) do not express existing restraint (cf. misunderstanding motif with 'concealment' verbs, not 'restraint': 9:45; 18:34) instantly restored (24:30; cf. 24:35). The two disciples misunderstand messianism, but the ophthalmic idioms pertain to (un)recognition whilst journeying.

⁹¹⁶ Bovon 2002–2013, 3:376.

⁹¹⁷ In this embedded (metadiegetic/hypodiegetic) narrative (like recounting events whilst on the road; cf. Genette 1980, 227-34; Bal 1981; Ryan 1986), they marvel over transpired events, particularly Jesus' scriptural exposition. This response accompanying Jesus' elusiveness and didactic activity resonates with his childhood (2:47-48a, 51b) and Nazareth visit (4:22); like elsewhere, Jesus is depicted as a teacher (Betz 1969, 36) or interpreter (Dinkler 2017b).

understand the scriptures (διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς, 24:45; cf. 24:46-47)⁹¹⁸—not further guiding understanding, but affecting cognition⁹¹⁹—though understanding remains deficient (cf. Acts 1:6). He governs the situation and circumstances:⁹²⁰ pretending to proceed onward (Luke 24:28), knowing that the disciples will extend hospitality; permitting recognition whilst breaking bread (24:30, 35),⁹²¹ knowing that they would apprehend its significance;⁹²² and creating a situation (24:13-19) to foster understanding (24:19-21, 25-27, 32, 44-47) and to establish witnesses (24:48-49).

Rather than the Emmaus disciples' (im)perception imitating a specific text, this phenomenon is illuminated when read within a range of ancient Mediterranean supernatural control traditions. Emphasis is on Jesus' activity whilst ὁ θεός/πατήρ is curiously absent.⁹²³ The reader detects the revived Messiah's supernatural control, indicating his theomorphic identity.

6.2.3. Ascertaining Jesus' Emmaus Departure Typology

My concentration on reflexive disappearances concluding epiphanies (§§2.1.3; 3.1.3) contributes a thorough backdrop for the reader's conceptualisation of Jesus' Emmaus departure. Similar or equivalent ancient terminology for diverse disappearance actional roles and types should caution specialists that lexical

⁹¹⁸ Cf. Cyril of Alexandria (*Comm. Luke*, ser. 125) conflates 24:31a and 24:45 (Jesus opens the disciples' eyes to the scriptures).

⁹¹⁹ Also Mann 2016a.

⁹²⁰ *Pace* Edwards' 2015, 724 (seeing only disappearance as supernatural).

⁹²¹ In 24:35, ὅτι (D) instead of ὡς reflects simultaneity, highlighting a temporal ἐν ('whilst'/'during') τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου; cf. Wolter 2016, 2:559 (contemporaneous actions); *pace* Robinson 1984, 484 (recognition during the meal, before disappearance). An instrumental ἐν ('by'/'with') suggests either simultaneous or causal action. Ernst (1993, 507) insists that breaking bread is the agent, but this implies the performer's causality.

⁹²² 'Breaking bread' in Luke-Acts (Luke 9:16; 22:19; Acts 2:42-46; 20:7; 27:35; cf. 1 Cor 11:23-24) is idiomatic for sharing a meal (cf. Jer 16:7; m. Ber. 6.1; b. Ber. 22a; 39a-40a; 47a; b. Pesah 64a-65b; t. Menah. 11.11-12; y. Ber. 43a; y. Ta'an. 5a-b; 1QS 6:4-6; 1QSa 2:17-21; see Smith 1987). Interpreters entertain eucharistic readings (e.g., Loisy 1924, 581; Just 1993; Pitre 2011, 198-202; cf. Decock 2002 [additional symbolism]) or speak of the unseen Jesus' presence in scriptural readings and the Lord's Supper (Betz 1969, 37-40; Marshall 1978, 898-900; cf. Terrien 2000, 431-34, 464-65), but sacramental use of this phrase developed later (Did. 9:1-5; 14:1-3; Ignatius, *Eph.* 20:2; Acts Thom. 27; 29; APT 1:11; see Finger 2007; Craig 2011, 68-101). Furthermore, the Emmaus disciples were not at the Last Supper (cf. οἱ ἀπόστολοι: Luke 22:14) and the expression in 24:30 is common (C.F. Evans 1990, 912-13; Morris 2008, 358-59). Given absent wine, 24:30 recalls 9:12-22 where Jesus' messianic identity and roles are stressed (Danker 1988, 394; Bock 1994/1996, 2:1919).

⁹²³ Cf. 24:19, 49 (Jesus = subject); 24:53 (God = object of praise).

indicators are ancillary to contextual factors. Reflexive pre-mortem or immortal disappearance accounts feature the following terms:⁹²⁴

- αἰδηλος (Apoll. Rhod. 4.865);
- ἀναβαίνω (Gen 17:22; 35:13; Jdg 13:20; Tob 12:20; T. Ab. [A] 8:1; 4 Bar. 3:17);
- ἀναλαμβάνω (T. Ab. [E] [B] 4:4);
- ἄνειμι (Josephus, *Ant.* 5.284);
- ἀνέρχομαι (T. Ab. [A] 4:5; Apoc. Mos. 43:4);
- ἀπέρχομαι (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.12; Jdg [A] 6:21; Jos. Asen. 17:6; T. Ab. [E] [B] 8:1; [A] 9:7; 3 Bar. 14:1; 4 Bar. 1:12; 6:18; Apoc. Mos. 14:1; T. Job 8:1);
- ἀφανίζω(-ομαι) (Diod. Sic. 5.51.4; Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5);
- ἀφαντόω (Apoll. Rhod. 4.1330);
- ἀφανής + γί[γ]νομαι (Pseudo-Plutarch, *De fluviiis* 4.3; 2 Macc 3:34; T. Ab. [A] 8.1; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.333);
- ἄφαντος + γί[γ]νομαι (Apoc. Mos. 20:3b [probably Satanic theriomorphism]);
- ἀφίστημι (T. Job 8:1);
- εισοράω [negated] (Eur., *Bacch.* 1077);
- εισδέρκομαι [negated] (Apoll. Rhod. 4.1363);
- πορεύομαι (Jdg [B] 6:21);
- *ascendo* (LAB 42:9);
- *evanesco* (Verg., *Aen.* 4.278; 9.658);
- and *sublimis + abeo* (Verg., *Aen.* 1.415).

Terms for post-translation disappearance vary:

- ἀναβαίνω (Rev 11:12 [passive, gradual ascension in a cloud]);
- ἀναφέρω (Plutarch, *Num.* 2.3);
- ἀφανίζω(-ομαι) (Hdt. 4.14.3; 4.15.3; Aristophanes, *Plut.* 741; Paus. 3.16.3);
- ἀφάνισις (Hdt. 4.15.1);

⁹²⁴ The following (inexhaustive) lists survey significant or common terminology.

- φέρω (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Para.* 32);
- *evanesco* (Ovid, *Fasti* 2.509);
- and *sublimis + abeo* (Livy 1.16.8).

Some terminology for these disappearance types occur for assumptions:⁹²⁵

- ἀναλαμβάνω for pre-mortem (T. Ab. [E] 8:3) with translation (2 Kgs 2:11; Sir 48:9; 49:14; 1 Macc 2:58) and post-mortem with translation (As. Mos.; Philo, *Mos.* 2.291);
- ἀφανίζω(-ομαι) for pre-mortem (Paus. 3.16.3; Hdt. 4.8.3) with translation (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.28; Plutarch, *Rom.* 27.3; *Cam.* 32.5; Diog. Laert. 8.69; Diod. Sic. 2.20.1; 2.56.6; Hdt. 7.166.1; 7.167.1; 7.167.2) and post-mortem with translation (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.326; Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.30; Antoninus Liberalis, *Metam.* 25; Isocrates, [*Archid.*] 6.18; Strabo 6.3.9; Lysias, *Orat.* 2.11);
- ἀφανίζω(-ομαι) + ὑποδέχομαι (Paus. 2.23.2) or γίγνομαι (9.19.4) for pre-mortem with translation (cf. ὑποδέχομαι alone, 1.34.2);
- ἀφανής + γί[γ]νομαι for pre-mortem (Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 3.1.1; Lucian, *Syr. d.* 4) with translation (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.28; Plutarch, *Rom.* 5.4; *Num.* 2.2; Dion. Hal., *Ant. rom.* 2.56.2; Arrian, *Anab.* 7.27.3);
- and ἄφαντος + γί[γ]νομαι for pre-mortem (Diod. Sic. 5.51.4) with translation (3.60.3; 4.82.6; Eur., *Orest.* 1494-98; cf. 1557, 1625-41) and post-mortem with translation (Diod. Sic. 4.58.6).

Luke's reader is cognisant of actional roles and types when considering analogues, even recalling more conceptually relevant instances with differing terminology. Apropos of that, commonly alleged parallels to Jesus' Emmaus disappearance require evaluation. Commentators frequently cite 2 Macc 3:34 where two youths (an angelomorphic theophany) ἀφανεῖς ἐγένοντο from Heliodorus, and T. Ab. [A] 8:1 where Michael εὐθέως ἀφανῆς ἐγένετο concluding his visitation. These

⁹²⁵ Other terminology is common for assumptions, e.g.: ἀρπάζω, ἀναρπάζω, ἐξαρπάζω, συναρπάζω, εὐρίσκω [negated], κλέπτω, λαμβάνω, μεθίστημι, μετατίθημι, ὀράω [negated], *aufereo*, (*com*)*pareo* [negated], *fugio*, *peto*, *rapiō*, *abripio*, *raptus*, and substantives ἀφανισμός, ἀρπαγή, and μετάστασις (see Lohfink 1971, 41-42; Parsons 1987, 135-39).

are lexically and formally similar to Luke 24:31b with ἀφανής (a cognate of ἄφαντος) + ἐγένετο and immortals suddenly vanishing after epiphanies, especially Michael’s account concluding a theoxenic episode. Other passages are less analogous. Helen’s εἶδωλον departs (Eur., *Hel.* 605-606; cf. 31-35), ‘taken up unseen’ (ἀρθεῖσ’ ἄφαντος, 606), gradually ascending beyond view into the clouds (cf. 613-19). *Orestes* 1494-98 is lexically parallel, relaying how Helen ‘became vanished’ within a house (ἐγένετο... ἄφαντος, 1495; cf. ἄφαντος οἴχεται, 1557), but Apollo raptures and immortalises her (1625-41).⁹²⁶ Apollo’s departure (Verg., *Aen.* 9.656-60; *ex oculis evanuit*, 658) is lexically similar to Luke 24:31b Vulg. (*et ipse evanuit ex oculis eorum*). The Vulgate, though late, affords Latin comparison with earlier Roman literature. Yet, some of the earliest (fourth/fifth century CE) OL witnesses differ, reading *ipse nusquam comparuit ab illis* (a), *ipse autem nusquam comparuit ab eis* (c, ff²), *non comparuit ab eis* (d, r¹), and *invisus factus est eis* (b), thus minimising the case for close lexical correspondences.⁹²⁷ Actually, Jerome selecting *evanuit* and adding *oculis* is either a Semitism or reflects antique Roman literary influence. Aside from flight in Vergil’s passage, vanishing concluding an epiphany is fairly similar.

Lohfink’s “*Himmelfahrt als Abschluß einer Erscheinung*” subtype examples could also be nuanced.⁹²⁸ I delineated how ἀναβαίνω (Gen 17:22; 35:13; 4 Bar. 3:17; Jdg 13:20; Tob 12:20), ἀπέρχομαι/πορεύομαι with ἐξ/ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ (Jdg 6:21 [A]/[B]), ἀναλαμβάνω/ἀνέρχομαι (T. Ab. [E] [B] 4:4/[A] 4:5), and ἀφανής + γί[γ]νομαι (2 Macc 3:34) primarily indicate reflexive, sudden or ascending vanishing (rather than gradual ascension), returning to heaven (§3.1.3). Uses of ἄνειμι (Josephus, *Ant.* 5.284) and *ascendo* (LAB 42.9) in receptions of Jdg 13:20 do not detract from this. 2 En. [J] 21:2 (Slavonic) clearly depicts angels reflexively and suddenly vanishing to heaven. Jub. 15:22 describes a reflexive, sudden, ascending disappearance, but God’s reflexive ascent is gradual in 32:20 (cf. 32:26 [an angel]). Jos. Asen. 17:6 depicts gradual ascent with a fiery chariot accompanying an angel, but after his reflexive, sudden vanishing (ἀπέρχομαι + ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῆς). The reader’s awareness of differing reflexive departure manners requires navigation of

⁹²⁶ Cf. *Hel.* 44-48.

⁹²⁷ Cf. *Itala*, 3:277 (*aur* agreeing with Vulg.).

⁹²⁸ Lohfink 1971, 75, cf. 70-72, 170 n. 17.

extratextual analogues, preferring sudden or ascending vanishing over gradual ascensions.

Jesus' post-resurrection (dis)appearances resemble Aristeas' post-translation (dis)appearances (Hdt. 4.14.1-15.3). However, after Aristeas' first post-translation disappearance, he reappears two-hundred-and-forty years later (14.15.1). Jesus reappears hours later (Luke 24:36). Aristeas becomes a subordinate deity ornithomorphically following Apollo and receiving a statue beside his altar (Hdt. 14.15.2). Jesus alone visits his disciples and receives their worship (Luke 24:52).⁹²⁹ Romulus' post-translation appearance concludes by ascending (*locutus sublimis abiit*, Livy 1.16.8) or being borne up into heaven (*ἀναφερόμενον*, Plutarch, *Num.* 2.3; cf. *Rom.* 27.1-28.3). Yet, Ovid's description, *in tenues oculis evanuit auras* (*Fasti*, 2.509), lends to sudden vanishing. Paralleled with the Romulus-legend is Peisistratus' apparent assumption (*φέρεσθαι*) concluding his post-translation appearance (Pseudo-Plutarch, *Para.* 32). Asclepius (in serpent-form) vanishing into a temple is too vague (Aristophanes, *Plut.* 740-41). The Dioscuri's post-translation *aphaneiae* (Justin 20.3), especially concluding their theoxeny in Amyclae (*ἠφάνιστο*, Paus. 3.16.3; though abducting Phormion's daughter), are more comparable to Jesus' disappearance. Finally, Empedocles' gradual evanescence is no sudden disappearance, and he reappears in Hades (probably an apparition) denying deification (Lucian, *Icar.* 15; cf. 13).

Divine guests elusively depart concluding incognito visitations (Hom., *Od.* 1.105; 2.268; 3.371-74). A well-suited though overlooked analogue to Jesus' disappearance is Dionysus' reflexive, sudden disappearance concluding his theoxeny (*τὸν ξένον... οὐκέτ' εἰσορᾶν παρῆν*, Eur., *Bacch.* 1077). Dionysus physically departs, since his voice shouts from the ether (1078-79). Stibbe does not consider the comparability between the Emmaus story and Dionysian myth, both of which he suggests as backgrounds for the elusive Jesus in John.⁹³⁰ MacDonald and Bilby examine imitation of Dionysian myth in John and Luke, but omit these disappearances.⁹³¹ Affinities between Dionysus' theoxeny and Jesus' programmatic

⁹²⁹ Probably omitted accidentally or deliberately among 'Western non-interpolations' (Metzger 1994, 163).

⁹³⁰ See Stibbe 1993.

⁹³¹ MacDonald 2017; Bilby 2018.

Nazareth visitation support the potential influence of this particular tradition.⁹³² The reader legitimately reads Jesus' Emmaus departure concluding his unrecognised visitation as an ancient Mediterranean *aphaneia* concluding an *epiphaneia* of an immortal(ised) figure.

Whether Jesus returns to heaven in the interim between disappearing and reappearing initially seems unclear (Luke 24:31b-36). Alternatively, no location is implied since Luke artificially connects stories.⁹³³ Nevertheless, epiphanic figures implicitly or explicitly return to heaven or God in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33; Acts 10:7; 12:10) and most immortal(ised) figures return to supramundane realms in ancient Mediterranean literature. Litwa suggests Jesus' teleportation from Emmaus to Jerusalem comparable to Apollonius (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.5, 10-12) or Aristeas (Hdt. 4.14.1-15.3).⁹³⁴ Apollonius teleports from Domitian's court, but Aristeas reappears centuries later. A teleportation occurs with Pancrates appearing then becoming absent, vanishing away without notice (Lucian, *Philops.* 36). Against reading teleportation in Luke's account is the apparent time-lapse with the disciples returning to Jerusalem (approximately seven miles). Actually, the reader construes Jesus' teleportation to Galilee after the devil translocates him to Jerusalem and 'stands' him on the temple (Luke 4:9, 13-14; §5.1.2). Less comparable is Litwa's example of Pythagoras' multilocationality (Aelian, *Var. hist.* 2.26; 4.17; Apoll. Paradox., *Hist. mir.* 6; Iamblichus, *VP* 134)⁹³⁵ since Jesus appears, disappears, and reappears sequentially, not appearing simultaneously in multiple locations. The reader conceives Jesus' Emmaus disappearance to heaven and reappearance as paradigmatic (forty-day tradition), rather than teleporting between earthly locations.⁹³⁶

Luke's reader may recall reflexive disappearances of other supramundane or divinely created figures, including in dreams or visions, such as phantoms, apparitions, or ghosts, some of these exhibiting quasi-materiality (§2.1.3.iii):

- Patroclus' ψυχή (Hom., *Il.* 23.100-101);⁹³⁷

⁹³² See Chapter 5.

⁹³³ Loisy 1924, 584.

⁹³⁴ Litwa 2019, 181-86.

⁹³⁵ Litwa 2019, 183.

⁹³⁶ Cf. Matthew 28:9-11, 16-17 (implied [dis]appearance).

⁹³⁷ Cf. Hom., *Od.* 6.13-49 (disguised Athene).

- Athene's εἶδωλον (*Od.* 4.796-839);
- Helen's εἶδωλον (*Eur., Hel.* 605-607; cf. 31-35, 613-19);
- a φάσμα engaging in sexual intercourse (*Hdt.* 6.67-69);
- a ὄψιν/ὄνειρον (7.12-18);
- a post-mortem youth (*P.Oxy.* 1368.37, 42);
- a superhuman figure/Imouthes-Asclepius in a dream (*P.Oxy.* 1381.124-25);
- Echetlaeus (*Paus.* 1.32.5);
- Demainete (*Lucian, Philops.* 27);
- Alexander in a dream (*Plutarch, Alex.* 18.4-5);
- Creusa's *umbra* (*Verg., Aen.* 2.791; cf. 2.772);
- Anchises' *imago* (5.740; cf. 6.695);
- Achilles' εἶδος (*Philost., Vit. Apoll.* 4.16.1-6);
- a disguised δαίμων identified as a φάσμα (4.10);
- or a shape-shifting empousa's φάσμα (2.4).

Nevertheless, the text of Luke 24 ultimately prevents identifying Jesus as less than fully and corporeally revived.

Prince suggests that Luke 24 both coincides and conflicts with Hellenistic representations of disembodied/insubstantial spirits, resuscitated revenants, heroes, and translated mortals, utilising a range of these to express Jesus' superiority amid contemporary Graeco-Roman expectations.⁹³⁸ She associates Jesus' post-resurrection (dis)appearances with disembodied spirits, arguing for inconsistency with resuscitated revenants, but without accounting for this ability of translated mortals.⁹³⁹ Whatever the comparability of extratextual disappearances, Jesus negates his return as a πνεῦμα, emphasising his corporeality by presenting limbs, eating, and possession of σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα (*Luke* 24:36-44; cf. *Acts* 10:41).⁹⁴⁰ A textual variant attests to at

⁹³⁸ Prince 2007. Her exclusion of theophanies and Jewish traditions is restrictive. She also overlooks bodily revivification/metamorphosis as immortalisation/deification (Litwa 2014, 152). See O'Connell's (2008; 2016) critique of bodiless-apparition resurrection appearances.

⁹³⁹ Prince 2007, 290, 296, 299.

⁹⁴⁰ Bovon 2002–2013, 3:375, 385-86; Somov 2017, 131-32, 137-39, 148-49. The reader may hear such details militating against an angelic Christology (see n. 338; cf. Goodman 1986; Fletcher-Louis 1997, 63-70; Catchpole 2000, 89-91). However, Jesus combats the supposition that he is a

least some early readers taking Jesus' actions as mistakeable for those of a φάντασμα (24:37 D; Marcion^{Tert}), more readily invoking apparition stories.⁹⁴¹ Jesus' missing body, (un)recognition, and (dis)appearances, lead the disciples to internal διαλογισμοί (24:38) about their encounters, requiring clarification.

The terminology of Luke 24:31b, defamiliarised translation and theoxenic tropes, Jesus' reappearance, the forty-day tradition (introduced in Acts), consideration of other Lukan departures, and recollection of extratextual analogues all guide the reader to conceptualise Jesus' Emmaus disappearance as a reflexive, sudden *aphaneia* concluding an *epiphaneia* of a visiting immortal(ised) figure. Rather than dependency on a specific intertextual source or appropriation from a particular cultural corpus, both Jewish and Graeco-Roman traditions are relevant and evocable.⁹⁴² The reader recognises the theomorphic Jesus as alive and present in his followers' lives, though principally from heaven.

6.3. Synthesis and Observations

To summarise, the Emmaus story reads as an ancient Mediterranean theoxenic episode, but with the immortalised, undisguised Messiah exercising cognitive-perceptual control. Imperception is the issue, not incredulity which is at the fore of the subsequent narrative with the cohort reluctant to believe Jesus' corporeal revivification. Neither does Jesus' invisible glory cause imperception as Bucur suggests, but the text guides the reader to imagine the supernatural activity of an external force, pointing to Jesus' causal agency.

My examination of Jesus' Emmaus disappearance departs from scholars' tendency to list alleged parallels uncritically (often over-relying on lexical

πνεῦμα, not an ἄγγελος (cf. Acts 12:15); still, humans might exist post-mortem in an interim or resurrected angelomorphic and/or pneumamorphic state (cf. Luke 20:36; Acts 23:8; see Daube 1990; Wright 2003, 134; Viviano and Taylor 1992). Smith (2010) summarises interpretations of Jesus' emphasis (Luke 24:36-43), including apologetic against ghostly construals, magical-daimonic notions, docetism, Marcionism, or Pauline resurrection (1 Cor 15:35-50), advocating the latter. Others see it not as apologetic, but thematic of the Twelve's authority (Matthews 2017), concerned with prophetic fulfilment and resurrection faith (Atkins 2019), or Luke's Jewish afterlife perspective (Thompson 2019).

⁹⁴¹ See NA²⁸, 290; Roth 2015, 183.

⁹⁴² Although ἄφαντος + γί[γ]νομαι is uncommon in biblical literature (Ehrhardt 1963, 185), it occurs in Apoc. Mos. 20:3b, and the cognate ἀφανής + γί[γ]νομαι is attested in 2 Macc 3:34; T. Ab. [A] 8.1; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.333.

agreements), some of which are formally or conceptually disparate. Luke's reader discerns actional roles, typologies, and contexts restricting comparability. Although Luke expands the primitive resurrection-ascension-exaltation complex, the narrativised resurrection and ascension (with gradual ascent) remain closely related as passive *Entrückungen*.⁹⁴³ The Emmaus disappearance reads as a composite of reflexive immortal and post-translation *aphaneiae* conventions, imported into an illustrated resurrection Christophany whose theoxenic form contextualises the concluding disappearance element implying Jesus' supramundane identity.

Contrary to the supposition that acquired bodily properties endow Jesus with transient abilities, the reader detects Jesus' pre- and post-mortem physical transience and supernatural control. This is supported for instance by Jerome writing against alleged Origenist views, arguing that Jesus vanishes by divine power (not like an immaterial phantom or by magic like Apollonius) and escapes the Nazarenes' hands, not only apparently physical like Marcion purports (*Jo. Hier.* 34).⁹⁴⁴ Jerome insists on Jesus' same body and appearance, even if exhibiting supernatural corporeality, able to control the Emmaus disciples' (im)perception facilitated by weak human senses (35). Neither Luke 24 nor Acts 1 specify Jesus' bodily transformation or acquired capacities. His physical transience further evinces that he is the same wonder-working Jesus his disciples know.

Reading with an ancient Mediterranean extratext offers a more realistic approach than theoretical lines minimising commonalities between Jewish and Graeco-Roman data which creates a bifurcation prompting unnecessary compulsion to favour a particular mode. The amalgamation of unrecognised visitation, supernatural control, and reflexive (dis)appearances—common ancient Mediterranean supramundane tokens—portrays Jesus as not merely angelomorphic, but exceptionally theomorphic. As Dillon observes, “Since individual features of our story are redolent of still other narrative forms... our composite picture is of a rich

⁹⁴³ Pace Maile 1986, 40-44 (concluding-epiphany convention for Jesus' ascension).

⁹⁴⁴ For Origen (*Cels.* 2.60-62), Jesus' appearances are not invented dreams or imaginary visions, but his intermediate body (*φαντάσματα/imago* of the *ψυχή*; drawing on Plato's *Phaedo*) enables him to control disciples' eyes and (dis)appear. Furthermore, Jesus could disappear from the cross to prove his divinity (like at Emmaus), but does not for salvific reasons (*Cels.* 2.68-69). Epiphanius (*Panarion* 42.11.17 Elenchus 77) argues that Jesus appears corporeally present (no apparition, contra Marcionites) to the Emmaus disciples, though they cannot perceive him, like Elisha's pursuers or men at Lot's door.

fusion of ancient motifs, not a single-minded emulation of any one of them”.⁹⁴⁵

Similar to Jesus’ elusive ministry and its conclusion in Luke 24 is the incognito visitation of the Euripidean Dionysus who seeks recognition, exercises supernatural control, and finally disappears (§§2.1.1.ii; 2.1.3.i; 2.1.5.ii).

Reading a theoxenic episode considerably supports a divine visitor Christology and the co-textual reference τοῦ πατρὸς μου (24:49)⁹⁴⁶ recalls the recurrent Son of God Christology (1:31-32, 35; 2:48-49; 3:22-23, 38; 4:3, 9, 22, 41; 8:28; 9:35; 10:21-22; 20:13 [symbolic]; 22:29, 42, 70; 23:34, 46; cf. Acts 9:20; 13:33; 20:28) of which concentrated instances form an *inclusio* in Luke’s Gospel (chs. 1-4; 22-24). The visitation of God’s Son begins with his conception and continues with his post-mortem presence, even if privately revealed. A suffering Messiah Christology permeates Luke 24. The reader observes the disciples’ epistemological improvement concerning messianic suffering, culminating in Luke 24 and attained by divine intervention (*angeli interpretes* and Jesus’ initiative), but not all christological mystery is bound in a *Leidensgeheimnis*. This is only partial reason for Jesus’ (superfluous) elusiveness who: appears unrecognised; exercises cognitive-perceptual control; conduces misunderstanding, feigning ignorance; elucidates scriptures about himself; pretends to continue journeying to be offered hospitality; reveals himself conjunctive with a sign; and (dis)appears instead of returning on foot (cf. 24:50). Even after ascending he reappears in Acts.⁹⁴⁷ Rather than terminating Jesus’ elusiveness, the Emmaus story perpetuates and accentuates it. It is not a finale unlocking all christological ‘mystery’.

The Emmaus story contributes to Christology and an elusiveness theme broader than *Geheimnis*-theories attest. Jesus’ presence and absence on the Emmaus road is evident.⁹⁴⁸ Through irony, reiteration, and reversals the disciples look for Jesus, αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον (Luke 24:24), and he comes revealing his presence.⁹⁴⁹ Carroll speaks of Jesus’ post-resurrection ‘elusive presence’.⁹⁵⁰ According to

⁹⁴⁵ Dillon 1978, 74 n. 14.

⁹⁴⁶ Although D omits this reading, this codex alters divine sonship terminology elsewhere (Luke 8:28; 10:22) (NA²⁸, 214, 227, 291).

⁹⁴⁷ See Chapters 7-8.

⁹⁴⁸ Dinkler 2013, 185-86; 2017b, 702-704.

⁹⁴⁹ Seim 2002, 161.

⁹⁵⁰ Carroll 2012, 487.

Johnson, Luke asserts "...both the reality of Jesus' presence and its difference from his former presence. The Emmaus story emphasized the elusiveness and indirection of Jesus' presence: Jesus could appear as a stranger without being recognized," whereas the reappearance story "...emphasizes the other side: he is not a ghost, but a real person: 'It is truly myself!'"⁹⁵¹ Jesus is indeed elusive, but not unlike his former presence and not assuming an unrecognisable appearance. His post-mortem displays of supernatural corporeality may be pronounced, but his conduct, private revelation, and phenomenal actions are no more elusive than his pre-mortem activity. Jesus remains elusive even whilst privately revealing himself revived and elucidating roles to privileged disciples, less accessible and operating from heaven, but hidden from others, at least until appearing to a foremost antagonist—a young man named Saul (Acts 9; 22; 26).⁹⁵² As with my other focal episodes, Luke's tactfully composed Emmaus story and its co-texts contribute to the reader's portraiture of the elusive Jesus. Although the reader does not emulate performative contemplations here, Luke's compositional rhetoric nonetheless encourages christological questions—trigue is preserved and the (re-)reader continues to ponder Christology. I now turn my attention to the ascended-exalted elusive Jesus in Acts.

⁹⁵¹ Johnson 1991, 405; similarly, Ernst 1993, 505-507.

⁹⁵² Notwithstanding *angeli interpretes*, other characters are absent, including in Acts 1; cf. Luke 24:20 (those responsible); Matt 28:11-1 (Jewish leaders address Jesus' missing body). Cf. Flender 1967, 11-13, 37-56 (pre- and post-mortem Jesus as heavenly Lord).

CHAPTER 7
ELUSIVE ACTS OF THE ASCENDED-EXALTED JESUS

**7.1. Evaluating Scholarly Interpretations and Establishing Interpretive
Limitations**

Luke's reader continues to build Jesus' elusive character in Acts after the narrativised ascension, chiefly by the Damascus road encounter (narrated: 9:1-19a; recounted by Paul: 22:6-16; 26:12-18), underscored comparative to other Christophanies. I begin by assessing how narrative details of the encounter and other Christophanies restrict interpretations of critics and the reader. We shall see how the reader particularly conceptualises Jesus' selective and partial (im)perceptibility and his supernatural control of epiphanic luminosity. My evaluation of scholars' (im)perceptibility and falling-down parallels will demonstrate how reading Jesus' exhibition of both selective and partial (im)perceptibility with epiphanic power toppling witnesses further attests to his extraordinary elusiveness. Additionally, my analysis will highlight how scholars' inattention to the incongruous effects of Jesus' luminous manifestation often leads to interpreting Paul's blinding merely by epiphanic light (despite epiphanic luminosity infrequently causing blindness), overlooking Jesus' control. Ultimately, Jesus' elusiveness in Acts furthers the reader's identification of him as exceptionally theomorphic and continues their ascertainment of a Lukan elusiveness theme.

**7.1.1. Scholarly Conceptualisations of Jesus' Damascus Road Manifestation
Require Reconfiguration Considering Its Effects**

Luke's foremost concern with the Damascus road encounter is to detail Paul's transformation into an apostolic witness,⁹⁵³ but it nevertheless contributes to Christology. Whether the reader contemplates the three accounts separately or collectively, Jesus is elusive: his luminous manifestation topples adversaries (9:3-4, 6, 8; 22:6-7, 10; 26:13-14, 16); he cryptically discloses his corporate presence (9:4-6; 22:7-10; 26:14-18); he blinds Paul (9:8-9; 22:11; cf. 26:18); and he manifests incompletely to others (9:7; 22:9; cf. 26:13). Details indicating [disparate]

⁹⁵³ See Clark 2001, 205-208 (apostolic witness). Paul replacing Judas is doubtful, but he is a divinely appointed apostle (Bale 2015, 154-82).

Christophanic impacts on Paul and his companions point to the corporeally present Jesus' (im)perceptibility and supernatural control.

According to the Acts 9 narrative, Paul approaches Damascus when 'suddenly a light (φῶς) from heaven flashed around (περιήστραψεν) him' (9:3). He falls and hears a φωνή asking, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' (9:4). The vocative κύριε in his enquiry 'Who are you, lord?' (9:5) is a formal address (cf. Luke 13:8, 25; 14:22; 19:16-25), applied also to heavenly figures (cf. Acts 10:4, 14; 11:8), since Paul has not yet embraced Jesus' lordship.⁹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, given the appellation [ὁ] κύριος for Jesus in Luke-Acts, the reader recognises both applications.⁹⁵⁵ Jesus' cryptic question (Acts 9:4) and statement ('I am Jesus whom you persecute', 9:5) creating rhetorical reduplication/*conduplicatio*⁹⁵⁶ disclose his corporate association with followers (cf. Luke 10:16),⁹⁵⁷ akin to Dionysus with bacchants (Eur., *Bacch.* 784-95).⁹⁵⁸ Jesus' statements also reveal his sovereignty. Paul can neither defeat the Jesus-movement nor resist joining it as Jesus' chosen instrument (cf. Acts 9:15). Various ancient Mediterranean figures speak celestially, normally God or angels in Jewish texts (Gen 21:17; 22:11, 15; Deut 4:36; 2 Sam 22:14; Ps 17:14; Dan 4:31; Sir 46:17).⁹⁵⁹ Paul associates the epiphanic phenomena with the self-identifying Jesus who walked the earth, now designating him a superhuman, celestial being.⁹⁶⁰

Whether Paul falls from fear, reverence, or force is undisclosed, but Jesus commands him to arise and enter Damascus whereupon he will receive further instructions (Acts 9:6). Paul is not aided to his feet. His companions may not fall since πεσών is singular (9:4) and 'they had stood (εἰστήκεισαν) speechless, indeed hearing (ἀκούοντες) the voice, but seeing no one (μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες)' (9:7). Alternatively, 'standing speechless' is figurative for bewilderment⁹⁶¹ or they stand

⁹⁵⁴ Given various heavenly κύριοι (Stuckenbruck 1995, 97-98 n. 129; cf. Malina and Pilch 2008, 71-73, 219-22), people enquired of celestial identity (Gen 32:29; Windisch 1932, 17); see Witherington 1998, 317.

⁹⁵⁵ Hamm 1990, 64; Keener 2012-2015, 2:1637 n. 373; cf. Rowe 2006, 148-49.

⁹⁵⁶ Cf. Rhet. Her. 4.28.38 (see Parsons 2008, 74, 127).

⁹⁵⁷ Haenchen 1971, 322.

⁹⁵⁸ Conzelmann 1972, 65.

⁹⁵⁹ Macnamara 2016, 77.

⁹⁶⁰ Pesch 1986, 1:304; Barrett 1994/1998, 1:450.

⁹⁶¹ Lilly 1944, 182-83.

after falling,⁹⁶² but the pluperfect εἰστήκεισαν simply conveys intransitive action.⁹⁶³ The companions' eyesight remains intact whilst Paul's is lost (ἀνεωγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν, 9:8).⁹⁶⁴ Hamm and Witherup identifying ἀνεωγμένων as a 'divine passive', attributing blinding to God,⁹⁶⁵ overextrapolate from grammatical voice in this case. This inference is dubious given Jesus' presence and activity in God's narrative absence. The singular αὐτοῦ and Paul's companions guiding him by hand to Damascus (9:8) where he is unable to see for three days (μὴ βλέπων, 9:9) confirms his exclusive blindness. Whether Jesus appears corporeally to everyone, only to Paul, or incorporeally as empyreal light and a voice, Ananias refers to 'Jesus who appeared (ὁ ὀφθείς)' (9:17) to Paul, and Barnabas later mentions that Paul 'saw' (εἶδεν) and 'spoke' (ἐλάλησεν) with 'the Lord' (9:27).⁹⁶⁶ Macnamara's interpretation that "partially sighted" companions lead Paul diminishes stressed variance.⁹⁶⁷ A narrative gap leaves the cause of blinding unspecified, though Jesus' luminescence is seemingly contributory.

Besides showing initiative,⁹⁶⁸ Jesus continues intervening and coordinating affairs in 9:10-19a. He speaks to Ananias in a vision (ὄραματι),⁹⁶⁹ sending him to lay hands on Paul so he 'will receive sight' (ἀναβλέψης) and be filled with the Spirit (9:12-17).⁹⁷⁰ The results are efficacious: 'and immediately [something] like scales (ὡς λεπίδες) fell from his eyes; he both saw again (ἀνέβλεψέν) and, arising, was baptised'

⁹⁶² Hedrick 1981, 431-32; Churchill 2010, 230 (citing Rev 7:11: angels εἰστήκεισαν [pluperfect] and ἔπεσαν [aorist]).

⁹⁶³ Transitivity of ἴστημι is often expressed with the present, imperfect, future, and weak aorist active (Luke 4:9; 9:47; Acts 5:27; 6:6; 22:30) whereas intransitivity is conveyed with the strong aorist and future (Luke 6:17; 7:14; 17:12; 18:40; 24:17; Acts 8:38) or perfect and pluperfect (Luke 23:10, 35; Acts 1:11; 5:25; 16:9; 22:25; 26:6; cf. Rev 5:6) (see *BDAG*, s.v. "ἴστημι"; cf. *LSJ*, s.v. "ἴστημι").

⁹⁶⁴ Since semantic ranges of θεωρέω (9:7) and βλέπω (9:8-9) overlap, differentiating their 'perception' and Paul's 'physical sight' is unwarranted (Keener 2012–2015, 2:1639 n. 382).

⁹⁶⁵ Hamm 1990, 64; Witherup 1992, 75-76.

⁹⁶⁶ On comparing Paul's experience in Acts and in Pauline epistles (including terminology of vision, light, glory, and revelation; Gal 1:1-17; 2:8; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:5-9; 2 Cor 1:1; 4:4-6; Rom 1:1-5; 11:13) see Kim 1984; 2002; Dunn 1987; Longenecker 1997; Matlock 2011.

⁹⁶⁷ Macnamara 2016, 85-87.

⁹⁶⁸ Cf. Churchill 2010 (see §1.1.2.iv).

⁹⁶⁹ Acts 9:10-16 is a 'Doppelträume' to Saul-Ananias (a vision [reported] within a vision) and 10:1-11:8 is a 'Doppelvision' to Cornelius-Peter (sequential or contemporaneous visions to two characters for a common purpose) (Wikenhauser 1948); see also Hanson 1980; Miller 2007.

⁹⁷⁰ The Spirit is mentioned only now, but Haenchen (1971, 324) sensibly comments, "...the narrator is not bound to repeat every detail of recurring features".

(9:18). For Hedrick, *λεπίδες* implies “divine disfavour” and God’s supernatural blinding to gain compliance (cf. Exod 4:1-9; Num 12:9-16; Acts 13:9-11).⁹⁷¹ However, *ὡς* designates metaphorical *λεπίδες* (cf. Tob 3:17; 11:13)⁹⁷² and nothing indicates God’s activity, but Jesus is present and active.⁹⁷³

Paul, recounting the event, tells Jews in Jerusalem that the light outshines the sun ‘around midday’ (*περὶ μεσημβρίαν*, 22:6), he fell (*ἔπεσά*, 22:7), and his companions ‘indeed saw (*ἐθεάσαντο*) the light, but did not hear (*οὐκ ἤκουσαν*) the voice of the one speaking (*τοῦ λαλοῦντός*)’ (22:9). The singular *ἔπεσά* does not exclude others possibly falling.⁹⁷⁴ Hedrick is confident that *τοῦ λαλοῦντός* “eliminates” the “bodiless voice” of 9:7,⁹⁷⁵ but amorphous voices speak in audible epiphanies (cf. Eur., *Bacch.* 1078-79). Nonetheless, Paul hearing Jesus’ voice *ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ* (Acts 22:14) indicates corporeality beyond figurative anthropomorphism. The accusative masculine singular *μηδένα* (‘no one’) in 9:7 implies that Paul sees someone (Jesus) amid the light, so the companions seeing light without Jesus comports with 22:9.⁹⁷⁶ A neuter plural (‘nothing’) still implies *something* in the light. Regarding differing audial experiences, Lilly’s resolution that Paul’s companions ‘heard’ (*ἀκούω* + genitive, 9:7) the *φωνή* but did not ‘understand’/‘perceive’ (*ἀκούω* + accusative, 22:9) its message⁹⁷⁷ is unlikely considering these constructions in Luke’s time and in his non-atticizing passages, as Keener shows.⁹⁷⁸ Polhill suggests that *φωνή* means ‘sound’/‘noise’ in Acts 9, but a ‘speaking’ (*λαλοῦντός*) voice in Acts 22.⁹⁷⁹ This solution has some merit, though the articular *τῆς φωνῆς* (9:7) which the companions partially experience is associated

⁹⁷¹ Hedrick 1981, 419 n. 14; similarly, Witherup 1992, 75-76.

⁹⁷² Johnson 1992, 165.

⁹⁷³ For O’Toole (1981, 475-79), additional to Christophanies, Jesus’ activity is implied as [ὁ] κύριος, including deliberately ambiguous instances (Acts 1:24; 13:47; 14:3; 15:11; 16:31; 21:13-14).

⁹⁷⁴ Barrett 1994/1998, 2:1157.

⁹⁷⁵ Hedrick 1981, 424.

⁹⁷⁶ So Roloff 1981, 322-23; Lüdemann 1989, 107-110; 2005, 125; Bock 2007, 359-60; Churchill 2010, 230-31.

⁹⁷⁷ Lilly 1944, 183-84; cf. Steuernagel 1989; Poirier (2003b, 114-16) suggests that Jesus speaks in Hebrew (not Aramaic; Acts 26:14; cf. 21:40; 22:2) which Paul’s companions ‘hear’ (9:7) but cannot ‘understand’ (22:9).

⁹⁷⁸ Keener 2012–2015, 3:3230.

⁹⁷⁹ Polhill 1992, 235 n. 15, 459-60.

with Jesus' speech (cf. 9:4). Given differing narrative orders describing the companions' experience after Jesus' message (9:7) or before it (22:9), Churchill extrapolates their delayed awareness of the voice.⁹⁸⁰ More compelling is Gaventa's explanation that Paul's dialogue emphasises their partial witness, seeing the light but not privileged with Jesus' message, then eliding after 9:8 (except recountings).⁹⁸¹ Only Paul converses with Jesus due to the exclusive message.⁹⁸² Consonant with the first account, Ananias says that God chose Paul 'to see (ἰδεῖν) the righteous one and to hear (ἀκοῦσαι) the voice from his mouth' (22:14) to testify about what he has 'seen and heard' (ἑώρακα καὶ ἤκουσα, 22:15).

The narrative gap of Paul's blinding (9:7-8) is partly resolved when he avers, 'I could not see because of the glory of that light' (οὐκ ἐνέβλεπον ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τοῦ φωτός ἐκείνου, 22:11a), problematising Stählin's solution that Paul is blinded alone seeing Jesus in the light.⁹⁸³ For Marshall, light expressing divine glory causes blindness, since nobody is able to see God.⁹⁸⁴ Actually, seeing God may result in *death*. Furthermore, Paul sees Jesus, not God. The light's brilliance (subjective/possessive genitive τοῦ φωτός) blinds Paul.⁹⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Jesus' appearance from heaven, having entered and appeared in δόξα (Luke 24:26; Acts 7:55), legitimates construing Jesus' δόξα emanating φῶς. Strelan refers to the light and voice as Jesus' "divine form" congruent with visibly unbearable divine luminosity traditions, further arguing that epiphanic audition had a visible characteristic (Jer 23:18; 38:21; Mart. Isa. 1.6; Ascen. Isa. 9.5; Aulus Gellius 5.15.1).⁹⁸⁶ However, Paul's companions see the light, but guide Paul who alone is blinded (Acts 22:9, 11). Miller, observing that scholars gloss this incongruity, assigns it to Paul's filtered retelling.⁹⁸⁷ Hedrick overemphasises the elision of 'scales' and assumes that the companions refrain from staring at a voiceless light (unlike Paul), so

⁹⁸⁰ Churchill 2010, 230.

⁹⁸¹ Gaventa 1986, 59-60, 71-72.

⁹⁸² Wikenhauser 1952, 315-16.

⁹⁸³ Stählin 1962, 134.

⁹⁸⁴ Marshall 1980, 169.

⁹⁸⁵ Cf. Isa 2:10; 22:23. Bock (2007, 660) equates glory and light, but one would expect an appositional genitive.

⁹⁸⁶ Strelan 2004, 171-73.

⁹⁸⁷ Miller 2007, 196.

Acts 22 describes natural blinding, not divine causation like Acts 9.⁹⁸⁸ Alternatively, this incongruity evinces disparate impacts and deliberate selective impairment.

Paul says in his recitation to Agrippa that at ‘midday’ (ἡμέρας μέσης) a light surpassing the sun’s ‘brilliance’ (τὴν λαμπρότητα) shines around him and his companions (26:13) and they all fall (26:14).⁹⁸⁹ A Hebrew/Aramaic voice declares, ‘it is hard for you to kick against the goads’ (σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν, 26:14). Jesus commands Paul to stand and claims to have appeared (ᾤφθην) for Paul to testify about this and subsequent manifestations (εἶδές... ὀφθήσομαί, 26:16).⁹⁹⁰ Jesus’ statement about opening Gentiles’ eyes and turning them from darkness to light alludes to Paul’s encounter (26:17-18).⁹⁹¹ The ‘heavenly vision’ (τῆ οὐρανίῳ ὀπτασίᾳ, 26:19; cf. Luke 24:23) description expresses phenomenality, not an internal, subjective experience. Despite potentially irreconcilable discrepancies and critics’ proposed explanations, the reader modifies interpretations considering all three accounts.

Although scholars are divided on whether Jesus manifests incorporeally (light and voice)⁹⁹² or corporeally,⁹⁹³ textual details restrict interpretations to the latter, though Paul is immediately blinded. Foster dismisses polymorphism due to lacking descriptions of physicality, notwithstanding light.⁹⁹⁴ Seim says that unlike Jesus’ resurrection appearances, recognition is by self-identification, not physical

⁹⁸⁸ Hedrick 1981, 424.

⁹⁸⁹ Light is described with increasing intensity from 9:3 (φῶς) to 22:6 and 22:11 (φῶς ἱκανόν flashes around at midday with blinding glory) to 26:13 (φῶς ἵσπερ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου) (Pervo 2009, 564, 631 n. 53).

⁹⁹⁰ The scribal interpolation με (B C*^{vid} 1175 1739 2464 sy sa [NA²⁸, 472]) clarifies Jesus’ visibility to Paul.

⁹⁹¹ Hamm (1990; cf. 1986) observes that the blindness/sight motif is multivalent of literal and spiritual blindness/healing in Acts 9, ambiguous in Acts 22, then metaphorical in Acts 26:21-23. For Hamm (1990), Israel’s Isaianic vocation as a ‘light’ to the nations (Isa 42:6; 49:6) becomes fulfilled through Jesus, Paul and Barnabas, and the church (Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23); similarly, Munck 1959, 24-30; Stählin 1962, 309; Tannehill 1986/1990, 1:66-67, 2:121-22, 322-25. Figuratively, Paul’s eyes are opened to facilitate opening others’ eyes, turning them from darkness to light (cf. Hartsock 2008, 184-97; Keener 2012–2015, 4:3519-34).

⁹⁹² Windisch 1932, 15-17 (referencing Yahweh’s fiery, nebular manifestation and passing glory [Exod 33-34]); Burchard 1970, 92; Conzelmann 1972, 65; Lohfink 1976, 26; Weiser 1981/1985, 1:224; Schille 1989, 220; Brenk 1994, 415; Miller 2007, 193 n. 98. On light as significant for amorphous epiphanies see Petridou 2009, 98-105.

⁹⁹³ Haenchen 1971, 321-22; Bauernfeind 1980, 133-35; Roloff 1981, 149; Pesch 1986, 1:303; Tannehill 1986/1990 2:120, 123-24, 280; Jervell 1998, 280; Eckey 2011, 1:288; Peterson 2009, 303; de Long 2017, 102.

⁹⁹⁴ Foster 2007, 73-74.

features.⁹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, cognitive-perceptual control preventing recognition and incredulity is an issue during resurrection appearances.⁹⁹⁶ MacDonald proposes imitation of Dionysus' epiphanies to maenads and Pentheus (Eur., *Bacch.* 555, 585-95, 794-96, 1078-83, 1111-13, 1118-21), but φῶς between οὐρανόν and earth accompanies Dionysus' *disappearance* (1078-83).⁹⁹⁷ For Terrien, Jesus' manifestation continues OT epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs and the divine presence through prophetic visions.⁹⁹⁸ Prior, in Acts 7, Stephen relates how ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης ὤφθη to Abraham (7:2) and an angel of the Lord appeared (ὤφθη/τοῦ ὀφθέντος) to Moses in the burning bush (7:30, 35), both with emphasis on hearing God speak in luminous form, then Stephen sees (εἶδεν) God's δόξαν and Jesus (7:55-60). Jesus appears to Paul in glorious luminosity whilst God elides from this recurrent glorious theophany motif.

Given frequently recognised correspondences with Euripides' *Bacchae*, I must address the extent of potential intertextuality.⁹⁹⁹ Among other thematic and lexical parallels, both the *Bacchae* and Acts include human antagonists opposing new religious/cultic movements, liberation miracles, the 'goad-proverb' (πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζοιμι, *Bacch.* 795; σκληρόν σοι πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν, Acts 26:14), and cognates θεομαχέω (*Bacch.* 44-45, 325, 1255; cf. πρὸς θεὸν... ἐς μάχην, 635-36) and θεομάχος (Acts 5:39, *hapax legomenon*).¹⁰⁰⁰ The *Bacchae* may have influenced other early Jewish or Christian literature, such as 3 Maccabees with themes of an antagonist resisting a religious movement and its god, hubris (ὑβρις), and divine retribution.¹⁰⁰¹ Seaford proposes that mystic initiations with divine power of thunder, lightning, and earthquake influenced the *Bacchae* (576-633) and Acts.¹⁰⁰² However, these elements are not all present in any single story in Acts. Furthermore, Acts uses σεισμός (16:26;

⁹⁹⁵ Seim 2009, 33.

⁹⁹⁶ See Chapter 6.

⁹⁹⁷ MacDonald 2015b, 52-57; 2019, 121-25.

⁹⁹⁸ Terrien 2000, 434-40, cf. 63-105, 227-77.

⁹⁹⁹ See §1.3.1.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Nestle 1900 (Luke's style unavoidably includes Graeco-Roman '*Reminiszenzen*'); Dibelius 1956; Lentz 1993, 84-87; Schäfer 2010; Friesen 2015, 207-271; cf. women disciples in Acts similar to bacchantes: Portefaix 1988, 100-106, 169-71; Matthews 2001, 72-77, 85, 132-33.

¹⁰⁰¹ So Cousland 2001; Moles 2006, 82-83 (adding 2 Maccabees).

¹⁰⁰² Seaford 1997; cf. Weaver 2004.

cf. Eur., *Herc. fur.* 862; *Iph. taur.* 1166) rather than ἔννοσις (*Bacch.* 585; cf. 602-603, 633). Although Paul hears the goad-proverb τῆ Ἑβραΐδι διαλέκτῳ (Acts 26:14), it is not found in Hebrew/Aramaic antiquity, but occurs in Graeco-Roman texts: Pindar, *Pyth.* 2.94-96; Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1624; Eur., *Iph. taur.* 1396 (with κῶμα); Aelius Aristides, *Orat.* 45.53; Julian, *Orat.* 8 [*To Sallust*] 246b.¹⁰⁰³ This attests to Luke's familiarity with a stock Graeco-Roman goad-proverb, not literary dependency.¹⁰⁰⁴ Common in Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature are the cognates θεομαχέω (Plutarch, *Apoph. lac.* 51; *Superst.* 7; *Marc.* 16.2; Xenophon, *Oec.* 16.3; Diod. Sic. 14.69.2; Lucian, *Salt.* 24; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.24.21, 3.24.24, 4.1.101; Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 4.44.4; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.246, 1.263) and θεομάχος (Symmachus 637; Vettius Valens 331.12; Lucian, *Jupp. trag.* 45; cf. θεομαχία: Plato, *Resp.* 378d 5), expressing opposition to those resisting divine volition. Although conscious appropriation of Euripides' *Bacchae* in Acts is indeterminate, overlaps are likely a product of ancient Mediterranean cultural literacy. The reader nevertheless invokes this renowned tragedy before less popular, inaccessible, or post-Lukan literature.

Paul's passivity throughout the encounter¹⁰⁰⁵ and its aftermath highlights Jesus' activity. Gaventa recognises this, but takes Paul's fasting (Acts 9:9b), praying (9:11), rising for baptism (9:18c), and eating (9:19a) as exhibiting activeness.¹⁰⁰⁶ She sees Paul as less 'incapacitated'/'immobilised' in his first recounting where he asks an additional question (22:10) and, though being led, says, 'I went (ἦλθον) to Damascus' (22:11).¹⁰⁰⁷ However, these actions are subsumed under his passivity: fasting results from subdual and blindness (cf. 9:9); whilst praying (recourse for comprehension) he receives a vision (9:11-12) and awaits Ananias' arrival who mediates healing; he rises (ἀναστάς) to be baptised (ἐβαπτίσθη), inferably by Ananias (9:18); strength from eating (λαβὼν τροφὴν ἐνίσχυσεν, 9:19) is no active exhibition; his additional question pertains to following instructions (22:10); and he goes to Damascus being commanded and guided (22:10-11). Paul transitions to an active role when εὐθέως proclaiming Jesus as God's Son (9:20).

¹⁰⁰³ See *LSJ*, s.v. "λακτίζω"; summary by Keener 2012–2015, 2:1209-1212, 4:3513-16.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Lothar Schmid, "κέντρον," *TDNT* 3:663-68.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Roloff 1981, 149-51; Pesch 1986, 1:303; Parsons 2008, 126; cf. Green 2015, 134 (atypical of active human roles in Lukan 'conversion' accounts).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Gaventa 1986, 60-65.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Gaventa 1986, 72.

Reisenotizen in all three accounts continue the journey motif: πορεύομαι (9:3, 11, 15; 22:5-6, 10, 21; 26:12-13), ὁδός (9:2, 17, 27; 22:4; 26:13), and ἐγγίζω (9:3; 22:6).¹⁰⁰⁸ Jesus interrupts Paul's persecutive journey to become a salvific mission. Paul ponders Christology whilst reassessing reality. He goes from enquiring of Jesus' identity (9:5; cf. 22:8; 26:15) to proclaiming him as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (9:20; cf. 13:33; 20:28), a stark contrast to his previous agenda (9:21; cf. 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-2). Divine sonship recalls my other focal episodes where Jesus' elusiveness also generates curiosity about his identity (Luke 2:49; 4:22; 24:49).

The text directs the reader to determine the following, considering all three accounts: Christophanic force topples the travellers who then stand unaided; they all see epiphanic light, but only Paul sees Jesus and is blinded; Paul dialogues with Jesus whilst the companions hear a noise/voice; and Paul's companions lead him to Damascus. Narrative details guide the reader to account for Jesus' corporeal presence, his activeness in blinding, and incongruous effects, including (im)perception. Blindness results from a concomitant, governing impetus—no mere consequence of luminosity—and differing experiences are attributable to Jesus' selective manifestation and/or supernatural control. Before examining these readings, I demonstrate how other Christophanies support these inklings and underscore Jesus' elusiveness on the Damascus road.

7.1.2. Jesus' Elusiveness on the Damascus Road Compared to Other Christophanies

Comparisons with other Christophanies to Paul which are neither luminous nor blinding highlight Jesus' elusiveness on the Damascus road. Jesus promises to appear again (Acts 26:16) and does (18:9-10; 22:17-21; 23:10-11; cf. 16:6-7).¹⁰⁰⁹ He (ὁ κύριος) speaks to Paul through a night 'vision' (ὄραματος, 18:9)¹⁰¹⁰ in Corinth, encouraging him and vowing protection (18:10), which will allow him to evade antagonists. This reassurance recalls pronouncements of divine guardianship (7:9;

¹⁰⁰⁸ Baban 2006, 207-226.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Contra O'Neill's (1955, 166, cf. 158) a priori determination that [ὁ] κύριος in dreams/visions in Acts refers to Yahweh (18:9; 23:11). Weiser (1981/1985, 2:406-415) summarises Paul's dreams/visions in Acts (including Christophanies), addressing comparable antique accounts.

¹⁰¹⁰ Night is common for manifestations and visions (Luke 2:8-9; Acts 5:19; 12:6-7; 16:9, 25-26; 18:9; 23:11; 27:23).

Exod 3:12; Deut 31:6; Jos 1:5, 9; Isa 41:10; 43:5; Jer 1:8).¹⁰¹¹ Similarly, Jesus' promise on the Damascus road that he is 'delivering' (ἐξαπρούμενός) Paul from antagonists (Acts 26:17) recalls divine deliverances (Exod 3:8; 18:4; Deut 32:29; Pss 36:40; 58:1), and Paul is delivered from impeding circumstances (Acts 16:35-40; 18:2-16; 19:23-41; 20:3).¹⁰¹² Whether ὁ κύριος is visible or only audible at Corinth is unspecified, but a similar temple-vision will corroborate his identity as Jesus whom Paul sees. Whilst praying in the temple, Paul becomes ecstatic (γενέσθαι με ἐν ἔκστασει) and sees (ιδεῖν) Jesus speaking (22:17-18).¹⁰¹³ Jesus enables Paul's elusiveness, directing him to flee inimical Jerusalemites (22:18-21). Paul's inclusion of his temple-vision following explanation of his Damascus road encounter strengthens an Isa 6 allusion;¹⁰¹⁴ he audaciously recounts seeing Jesus, whom he called κύριε (22:19), in the temple (wherein is Yahweh's presence), infuriating his Jewish audience (22:22-23).¹⁰¹⁵ They listen until he quotes Jesus speak of a Gentile mission (22:21-22), mirroring the Nazareth episode. Paul sees ὁ κύριος (Jesus) again in a barracks (23:10) at night, 'standing by' (ἐπιστάς) and encouraging him since he must testify in Rome (23:11; cf. 9:4-7; 19:21; 27:24).¹⁰¹⁶ Paul's destiny and suffering are 'necessary' (δεῖ) and ordained (23:11; cf. 9:6, 16), recalling Jesus' 'necessary' mission.¹⁰¹⁷ The form and language of angelophanies and Christophanies coincide, yet Jesus is no 'angel or spirit' speaking to Paul (Acts 23:1-10; cf. 27:23), but ὁ κύριος (23:11).¹⁰¹⁸

Although concluding disappearances are not recorded for Christophanies in Acts (unlike Luke 24:31b), Jesus initiates unexpected, brief appearances (including induced dream-visions) to direct and reassure Paul vis-à-vis active involvement in his

¹⁰¹¹ Stählin 1962, 245.

¹⁰¹² Johnson 1992, 426.

¹⁰¹³ Ecstasy/ἔκστασις neither detracts from objective epiphanies (Acts 10:10; 11:5) nor is entirely induced by prayer or hunger occasioning crucial epiphanic messages, but is divinely imposed at opportune times.

¹⁰¹⁴ Betz 1990. Pervo (2009, 566 n. 67) observes epiphanies frequent in temple-visions (1 Sam 3:3-10; 1 Kgs 3:4-5; Isa 6:1; Dan 9:20-27; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.282-83; b. Yoma 39b; Luke 1:8-20).

¹⁰¹⁵ Strelan 2004, 182.

¹⁰¹⁶ On epiphanic 'standing' see §6.1.2.

¹⁰¹⁷ Luke 2:49; 4:43-44; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44; Acts 1:16; 17:3; cf. 14:22; 16:30; also Cosgrove 1984, 176-83.

¹⁰¹⁸ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 50-61.

affairs. His promises of rescue imply his perpetual activity,¹⁰¹⁹ sovereignty, and presence. This contributes to Jesus' elusiveness, though his toppling power, luminosity, blinding of Paul, and selectivity/partiality on the Damascus road—all suggesting his control of epiphanic (im)perceptibility and impacts—underscore his elusiveness there.

Accounting for Christophanies to others further accentuates Jesus' elusiveness on the Damascus road. His transfiguration, depicted epiphanically,¹⁰²⁰ previews his post-mortem existence and eschatological glory, involving his changed (ἕτερον) facial appearance and flashing white (λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων) clothing (Luke 9:29).¹⁰²¹ Although Luke omits μετεμορφώθη (Mark 9:2-3//Matt 17:1-2), the reader infers transformation. The disciples see the δόξα of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah (Luke 9:30-32). Jesus' luminous face and presence in glory on the mountain allude to Yahweh's glory transferred to Moses' face, recontextualised as a glimpse at eschatological transformation or shared divine glory.¹⁰²² Fletcher-Louis argues for an exemplary angelisation/angelomorphism of the righteous in eschatological glory (and revelation of Jesus' divinity).¹⁰²³ Angelomorphism characterises righteous Israelites (Dan 12:2-3; 1 En. 38:4; 39:7; 58:3; 62:15-16; 92:4; 96:3; 104:2; 106:12-14; 108:12; 4 Ezra 7:33-44, 125; 2 Bar. 51:3, 10-12; Pss. Sol. 3:12; T. Job 40:3).¹⁰²⁴ Nevertheless, glory is ultimately theomorphic, not strictly angelomorphic. The disciples are not blinded, and Peter's misunderstanding (9:33) prevents the generalisation that absence of physical blinding encodes absence of spiritual blindness. Jesus' eschatological luminosity is displayed with his parousia illuminating the sky like lightning (17:24; cf. Matt 24:27) when he (the Son of Man) comes τῆ δόξῃ shared among the Father and angels (Luke 9:26; cf. Mark 8:38; Matt 16:27; 25:31) and in a cloud with power

¹⁰¹⁹ O'Toole 1981, 476. Ἐξαπέω, mostly employed of Yahweh (LXX), used of Jesus as ὁ κύριος (Acts 26:15-18) suggests proximity to God (Churchill 2010, 169-71, 217, 240-42).

¹⁰²⁰ See §5.2.2. See also Litwa (2014, 111-40) on the Markan transfiguration as an epiphany using Jewish and Graeco-Roman motifs, comparative with the Philonic Moses, thus depicting a deified Jesus.

¹⁰²¹ See Seim 2009, 36-37 (more like the Damascus road manifestation).

¹⁰²² Similarly, Parsons 2015, 154-57.

¹⁰²³ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 38-50.

¹⁰²⁴ See Fletcher-Louis 1997, 109-215; Lehtipuu 2007, 120-54; Collins 2009; Somov 2017, 171-80; cf. transformed/exalted heroes (Samuel: 1 Sam 28:13-14; Jeremiah: 2 Macc 15:13-14; Enoch: Jub. 4:23; 2 En. 22:8; Adam and Abel: T. Ab. [A] 11-13) (Dunn 1987, 260).

and δόξης πολλῆς (Luke 21:27; cf. Mark 13:26//Matt 24:30), having entered his δόξαν (Luke 24:26). Yet, he appears resurrected without luminosity, but exercising cognitive-perceptual control (Chapter 6).¹⁰²⁵

Stephen gazes into heaven and sees the δόξαν θεοῦ and Jesus, the Son of Man, ‘standing (ἑστῶτα) at the right hand of God’ (Acts 7:55-56 [x2]), a position raising christological questions (cf. Ps 110:1; Luke 20:41-44; 22:67-69; Acts 2:22-36; 5:30-31).¹⁰²⁶ Δόξα is luminous (Luke 2:9; 9:26, 31-32; 21:27; 24:26; Acts 22:11), yet Stephen sees Jesus without hindrance.¹⁰²⁷ The Spirit does not protect Stephen from blindness (Acts 7:55; cf. 6:3, 15), since others without pneumatic aid witness divine glory (Luke 2:9; 9:28-32). Stephen previously recounts manifestations of God’s glory to Abraham (Acts 7:2) and an angel of the Lord to Moses in the enflamed bush (7:30-35; cf. Exod 3:2-4:19; Luke 20:37), instances without inhibition. Although visibility is unmentioned when ὁ κύριος speaks (εἶπεν) to Ananias in an ὄραματι (Acts 9:10-11, 15), Ananias says that ὁ κύριος/Jesus, who appeared (ὁ ὀφθείς) to Paul, sent him (9:17; cf. 22:12-16).¹⁰²⁸ De Long argues that visibility of a speaking epiphanic figure is often assumed, especially since most visions in Acts have visual components and Jesus as the visual subject, so Ananias sees Jesus (as does Paul in 18:9-10).¹⁰²⁹ Luminosity is nevertheless absent. Glory, whether transferred, inherited, or shared, is only blinding on the Damascus road in Luke-Acts.

¹⁰²⁵ Cf. Luminosity absent: LEM 16:12-14; John 20:14-15; luminous Jesus: Titus 6:16; Rev 1:10; 21:23; 22:5.

¹⁰²⁶ Standing is plausibly to welcome Stephen into the divine presence (cf. Luke 23:43; Haenchen 1971, 292 n. 4) or to act as a witness/advocate (cf. 12:8; Crump 1992, 178-203; Witherington 1998, 275). Acts 7 depicts Jesus’ elusive presence until his parousia (Terrien 2000, 449-51).

¹⁰²⁷ Spencer (2004, 106) briefly notes contrast with Paul’s blinding. Cf. Isaac’s eyes grow dim after seeing the throne of glory during his binding (Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 27:1; Gen. Rab. 65; 138a) (Barrett 1994/1998, 1:383).

¹⁰²⁸ Ὁ κύριος is not God, then called Jesus (contra O’Neill 1955, 164-65).

¹⁰²⁹ De Long 2017, 102. Peter addresses an amorphous φωνή speaking ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ as κύριε (10:13-14; 11:7-9)—probably God (cf. Luke 3:22; 9:35; Keener 2012–2015, 2:1771, 1824, cf. 1634-35 [rabbinic לִּקְרָא analogous]); cf. 1 En. 13:8-10. (In)audible/internal communicative manifestations of the Spirit are also common (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2, 4; cf. 23:9). Wilson (2016) argues that in terms of experiencing divine phenomena, Greeks revered visual perception whereas Jews revered aural directives, so Acts features both optical and verbal epiphanic imagery (verbal usually emphasised). Prince (2018) suggests that epiphanic visions in Acts allow the [Hellenistic] reader to become a fellow witness vividly perceiving insights, persuading them of the gospel’s authenticity.

Some scholars conclude that Jesus' ascended and resurrected forms differ, since he travels and eats¹⁰³⁰ or is non-luminous in Luke 24 and Acts 1.¹⁰³¹ Alsup identifies Christophanies on the Damascus road and to Stephen as a "heavenly radiance appearance" *Gattung* different from the anthropomorphic "bodily encounter" of resurrection appearances and even the transfiguration,¹⁰³² but this specification involving luminosity divorces these from other Christophanies. Jesus' interactive or Christophanic mode partly differs after the narrativised ascension—chiefly operating from heaven where he 'must' (δεῖ) remain (Acts 3:21), briefly appearing (including dreams/visions), and depicted with less physicality—but without assuming another ascended form.¹⁰³³ The Damascus road encounter is programmatic for Jesus' continual presence and preservation of Paul, not paradigmatic for Christophanic phenomena. Thus, the reader ascertains Jesus' heightened elusive activity on the Damascus road, demonstrating power and establishing Paul's apostleship among (partial) witnesses. Although epiphanic force, luminosity, blinding, and selective/partial (im)perceptivity during the dramatic revelation on the Damascus road are not repeated in subsequent Christophanies, Jesus' theomorphic, reflexive/active elusive presence (like God and in God's narrative absence) remain consistent from Luke's Gospel and throughout Acts. Ultimately, the portrayal of the elusive Jesus in Acts reinforces my findings from Luke's Gospel, further indicating his exceptionally theomorphic identity. I shall now examine how the extratextual-informed reader conceptualises Jesus' elusiveness on the Damascus road in terms of (im)perceptibility and supernatural control.

¹⁰³⁰ Marshall 1980, 169; Peterson 2009, 300.

¹⁰³¹ Benoit 1949; Stanley 1953, 331; Lohfink 1976, 26; Seim 2009, 33-34; Somov 2017, 208-214.

¹⁰³² Alsup 1975, 55-56, 83-85, 141-44.

¹⁰³³ Zwiep (2016, 18) criticises Sleeman's (2009, 16, 197-216) understanding of the Damascus Road encounter writing, "Luke seems to make a clear qualitative distinction between the (visionary) experience of Paul and the post-resurrection appearances to the apostolic witnesses—he calls Paul's experience a 'heavenly vision' (οὐρανοῦ ὄρασις, Acts 26:19), that is, an event of a different order than the crudely materialistic apostolic Christophanies in Acts 1, even though it is the same Lord who appears." However, we have seen how 'vision' language describing epiphanies in Luke-Acts does not necessarily imply an immaterial or subjective experience (cf. Luke 1:22; 24:23; §7.1.1). As I maintain, Christophanies before and after the narrativised ascension do not so much depict a 'qualitative distinction' in which Jesus is 'crudely materialistic' in Acts 1 (or Luke 24), but illustrate different epiphanic modes or locations, supporting a christological presence-absence tension which Sleeman also observes.

7.2. Readings of Ancient Mediterranean Elusiveness in the Damascus Road Encounter

7.2.1. Jesus' Damascus Road Manifestation in the Light of Ancient Mediterranean Epiphanies

The reader recognises Jesus' Damascus road manifestation as a luminous heavenly epiphany, sharing features, forms, and functions with ancient Mediterranean traditions (§§2.1.2; 3.1.2).¹⁰³⁴ Unsurprisingly, Luke describes φῶς appearing ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Acts 9:3; 22:6)/οὐρανόθεν (26:13) with recourse to other luminous heavenly epiphany terminology (περιαστράπτω, Acts 9:3; 22:6; 4 Macc 4:10; Julian, *Orat.* 4 [*Hymn to Helios*] 131a; περιλάμπω, Acts 26:13; Luke 2:9; Philo, *Ios.* 1.146; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.25; *J.W.* 6.290; Plutarch, *Alex.* 2; *Per.* 39.3; Julian, *Orat.* 4 [*Hymn to Helios*] 140a, cf. 133b, 134b, 142a)¹⁰³⁵ or in terms of divine luminosity or favour (λαμπρότης, Acts 26:13; Pss 89:17; 109:3; Isa 60:3; Bar 4:24; 5:3; Dan [θ'] 12:3).

The story-form has occupied researchers who offer various parallels. Windisch suggests resemblances with Yahwistic theophanies, the Heliodorus-legend (2 Macc 3:24-40), and Heracles' appearance concluding Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (1408ff.), but determines conscious modelling after Euripides' *Bacchae* and OT Saul-David stories.¹⁰³⁶ Lohfink proposes Jewish accounts of epiphanic speech (*Erscheinungsgespräch*: Gen 22:1-2; 31:11-13; 46:2-3; Jos. Asen. 14:6-8).¹⁰³⁷ For Stanley, Luke clarifies that Paul 'saw' Jesus (subsequently being filled with the Spirit and suffering) to become an apostolic witness and an inaugurated prophet like Ezekiel (Ezek 1:25-2:1).¹⁰³⁸ In this vein, Munck parallels prophets called through theophanies or visions, a pattern involving light, the enthroned Lord, and the witness falling then raised (1 En. 14:13-25; 15-16; Ezek 1:26-28; 2:1-3ff.; Isa 6:1-8ff.; Jer 1:6-9ff.; cf. Dan 7:9-10; 8:17-18; 1 En. 71:2-16).¹⁰³⁹ Similarly, Zimmerli concludes that Acts 9:3-

¹⁰³⁴ See Schneider 1980/1982, 2:24-28; Weiser 1981/1985, 1:216-24; Johnson 1992, 162-63, 167-68; Keener 2012-2015, 2:1630-33.

¹⁰³⁵ Περιλάμπω can describe luminous garments (Lucian, *Ind.* 9), armour causing a deterred gaze (Plutarch, *Cam.* 17.5), and renowned humans (Servius' face at birth: Plutarch, *Fort. Rom.* 10; Menippus: Lucian, *Icar.* 15 [in Hades]; impressive power: Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.22.28).

¹⁰³⁶ Windisch 1932; cf. Löning 1973, 64-70.

¹⁰³⁷ Lohfink 1965; 1966, 53-59.

¹⁰³⁸ Stanley 1953, 328-37.

¹⁰³⁹ Munck 1959, 11-35; cf. 1967, 81-83, 242. Unlike Munck, Hedrick (1981) attributes the OT call/commissioning motifs to Lukan style rather than sharing this form with Gal 1:15.

9 is structured according to two forms of an OT ‘prophetic call narrative’ (*prophetischen Berufungsberichte*: Exod 3; Jdg 6; 1 Sam 9-10; Isa 49:1-6; Jer 1:4-10; Ezek 1-3; throne-room theophany: Isa 6; 1 Kgs 22:19-22).¹⁰⁴⁰ Rather than a call-story, others see Paul’s encounter as a commissioning-story.¹⁰⁴¹ Burchard classifies Acts 9:1-19a as a conversion-story (*Bekehrungserzählung*: Jos. Asen. 1-25; Apuleius, *Metam.* 11.1-30; Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesian Tale*).¹⁰⁴² Advocating Burchard’s examples, Fletcher-Louis argues for an angelophanic mode of Christophanies (cf. Gen 22; 31; Exod 3; 2 Macc 3; Jos. Asen.; Apoc. Ab.; Acts 10:3-4), finding the Damascus road encounter most comparable to the epiphany to Daniel as others flee (Dan 10:7) and the audible luminous angelophany to Job (T. Job 3:1; 4:1).¹⁰⁴³ However, Luke’s reader, not restricted to Jewish extratextual data, reads Christophanies not as essentially angelomorphic, but theomorphic. Talbert, Pervo, Keener, and others acknowledge combined story-forms,¹⁰⁴⁴ and Pesch sees manifold conventions (including in the co-text) without replicating a particular *Gattung* (*Epiphanieerzählungen, Berufungsgeschichten, Erscheinungsgespräche, Korrespondenzvisionen, or Heilungswundergeschichten*).¹⁰⁴⁵ The reader detects an integrative conventional composite, as with my other focal episodes.

Seeing and hearing Jesus affords Paul apostleship (cf. Acts 1:21-26). The apostles are confident that ὁ κύριος ‘chose’ (ἐξελέξω, 1:24; cf. 1:2) Matthias to replace Judas. Jesus calling Paul his ‘chosen’ (ἐκλογή) vessel (9:15) does not undermine Matthias’ apostleship among the Twelve. Paul, called an ἀπόστολος once (along with Barnabas), is deferential to apostles and elders in Jerusalem (14:14; cf. 9:27; 15:2-30; 16:4). Nevertheless, the reader interprets Paul’s encounter as a privileged witness to Jesus’ living existence (paradoxically revealed-yet-concealed), ironically despite blinding.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Zimmerli 1969. Steck (1976) separates throne-room theophany from the *Berufungsgattung*.

¹⁰⁴¹ Mullins 1976; Kowalski 2003; Czachesz 2007.

¹⁰⁴² Burchard 1970, 59-105. Oliver (2019) defends a call-story against a conversion-story.

¹⁰⁴³ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 51-56; but cf. O’Toole 1978.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Talbert 2005, 82-90, 192-93, 207-208 (‘choice’, ‘call’, ‘conversion’, and ‘commissioning’). Seeing a conversion-story (Acts 9) becoming a call-story (Acts 22; 26): Schneider 1980/1982, 2:22; Pervo 2009, 235-36. Keener (2012–2015, 2:1608-1609, 1614-17, 1640, 3:3231, cf. 4:3510-27) sees conversion and call (without dependency on Jos. Asen.).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Pesch 1986, 1:300.

Luke's reader, drawing from extratextual selective or partial epiphany or (in)visibility examples (§§2.1.2; 2.1.4; 3.1.2; 3.1.4) and accounting for intratextual Christophanies, imagines Jesus as both selectively and partially (im)perceptible, visible and audible to Paul whilst invisible (apart from light) and inaudible/unintelligible to Paul's companions. Bremmer recognises that Luke strives to remain in continuity with traditional uses of a divine selective epiphany motif whilst indicating the phenomenon's authentication by specifying that everyone present experiences it to some extent.¹⁰⁴⁶ He also sees Jesus' partial-form appearance as atypical of Graeco-Roman divine epiphanies.¹⁰⁴⁷ However, the reader's extratext features amorphous epiphanies of light and/or sound (e.g., Eur., *Bacch.* 1077-83; Nonnus, *Dion.* 45.273-84; Xenophon, *Cyr.* 4.2.15; cf. 4.3.6 [Zeus]; Max. Tyre, *Or.* 9.7; cf. Jewish traditions: Exod 3:2-3; Wis 18:1-4; T. Job 3:1-7; 4:1; 5:2). Nonetheless, Paul sees someone (Jesus) amid the light at the moment he is blinded.

In what follows, I address Wikenhauser's suggested parallels, including instances with a divine prerogative of selective/partial (im)perceptibility, lexical overlap, and epiphanic forces (allegedly) toppling witnesses (several of which were included in the reader's extratext). Wikenhauser only comments that spectators are told to stand and usually supported, the latter detail dissimilar to Paul's encounter.¹⁰⁴⁸

Several epiphanies are strictly selective, not also partial: Athene (sent by Hera) only to Achilles (Hom., *Il.* 1.194-205); Athene to Odysseus, but unseen and unnoticed to Telemachus (*Od.* 16.154-63); Thetis to Peleus (Apoll. Rhod. 4.851-54); a divine/superhuman appearance guiding the diaspora (Philo, *Exsecr.* 165); and the angel of Yahweh in the burning bush to Moses, despite others present (Exod. Rab. 2.8).¹⁰⁴⁹ Although some of these share features with the Damascus road encounter, Jesus' luminous and celestial manifestation which Paul's companions partially experience differs from standing, physical contact, recognisability, and/or complete

¹⁰⁴⁶ Bremmer 2008b, 379. The companions' partial witness establishes objectivity (Haenchen 1971, 322); cf. Malina and Neyrey 1996, 86-91 (proofs: light, blinding, companions, and Ananias). Some emphasise a psychological experience (Pilch 2002; Malina and Pilch 2008, 67-70, 156-57, 168-69). Still, it is no *merkabah* vision (*pace* Bowker 1971).

¹⁰⁴⁷ Bremmer 2008b, 382.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, the following ancient references/parallels in this section are from Wikenhauser 1952.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Commenting on יָרָא/'to him' (Exod 3:2) and referencing Dan 10:7. This is very late, dated ca. tenth–thirteenth century CE (Strack and Stemberger 1996, 308-309).

imperceptibility to others. Some traditions involve imposed emotions (fear) or supernatural control of others who perceive effects, but see or hear nothing, such as Daniel’s companions (Dan 10:5-8)¹⁰⁵⁰ and the Jews’/Judeans’ enemies (3 Macc 6:18-41).

John 12:28-30 relates not diverse perceptivity, but how a crowd ‘hearing’ (ἀκούσας) a heavenly voice (coming for their sake) struggles to identify it—some ascribing it to thunder, others to an angel. Better is Luke’s own report of the Spirit’s activity, causing selectively epiphanic, fire-like tongues resting upon the disciples (ᾠφθησαν... γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός... ἐκάθισεν) and a φωνή at which people gather who each hear their own native language spoken differently, though not partially (Acts 2:1-12).

Despite Deut 4:12 offering lexical contacts (λαλέω; κύριος; φωνή; ἀκούω; ὁράω) with luminosity and God speaking, everyone witnesses the same phenomena and clarification is given that he is either obscured or corporeally absent apart from an amorphous voice speaking amid fire (hence they see no ὁμοίωμα/תְּמוּנָה, but only ἡ φωνή/לִשְׁמַע תְּהִלָּתוֹ; cf. 4:15, 33, 36; 5:4, 22; Exod 20:22; 24:9-11). Neither the Israelites nor luminous phenomena guiding them in the wilderness are invisible to their enemies, but they only hear the Israelites’ voices because they are deprived of partaking in light which obscures (Wis 18:1-4: φῶς; φωνή; ἀκούω; ὁράω). Jesus’ statement in John 5:37 (φωνή; ἀκούω; ὁράω) may imply selectivity in that he sees and hears (past or present) the Father’s εἶδος and φωνή whereas others do not, but this is not of an epiphany.

Although some Christian traditions involve selective and/or partial epiphanies, including depictions of luminosity, only Christians perceive phenomena whilst others witness either nothing or only effects (Mart. Pol. 9.1; 15.1-2; Acts Thom. 153 [guards asleep]), or [some] phenomena becomes perceptible to others (Acts Thom. 27; 42-46). Andrew is invisible or hiding from the devil who cannot always see the saints (Acts Andr. Mth. 24). Accounts of figures appearing and speaking to Martin (a post-mortem youth) and Benedict (the devil) without others seeing or hearing anything (Sulpicius Severus, *Life Mart.* 11; Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 2.8) involve both selective

¹⁰⁵⁰ Cf. יְבַדֵּי HB (‘by myself’/‘I alone’).

and partial (im)perceptibility, but are late and undoubtedly dependent on Acts or other Christian literature.

Scholars repeat these parallels,¹⁰⁵¹ occasionally adding others. Conzelmann's addition of a singing youth (apparently Achilles) is not partial or selective (im)perceptibility since witnesses either sight the quiescent youth or hear him sing without locating him (Max. Tyre, *Or.* 9.7).¹⁰⁵² Maximus of Tyre's emphasis on the extent of witness is evident as he proceeds to relate other epiphanies rumoured or witnessed himself. Barrett's contribution of audible epiphanies of Athene to Odysseus (Sophocles, *Aj.* 15) and Artemis to Hippolytus (Eur., *Hipp.* 86) are more relevant, but Paul's companions at least see light.¹⁰⁵³ Pervo's additions from the *Bacchae* are inapplicable, since lines 500-503 speak of impiety preventing realisation that the stranger is Dionysus, and line 1086 does not say that "others do not hear the voice," but that the bacchants 'did not clearly understand' (οὐ σαφῶς δεδεγμέναι), so they look around before Dionysus repeats himself (1087-89).¹⁰⁵⁴ Keener includes Apollonius' post-mortem appearance to a youth whose peers see nothing (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.31) and Jesus' resurrection appearances (Acts 10:40-41), but in the former the youth leaps up 'half-asleep' (ὠμόυπνον) relaying a dream-vision (perhaps by Apollonius' prerogative in answer to prayer) and in the latter Jesus appears privately, not partially.¹⁰⁵⁵ To these parallels could be added the partial theophany of Pan speaking to Pheidippides (Hdt. 6.105-106; Paus. 1.28.4; 8.54.6) and the selective angelophanies of Balaam later perceiving the angel of the Lord initially visible only to his donkey (Num 22:22-35) and Goliath later perceiving the angel invisibly aiding David (LAB 61:8). However, these involve only either partial perceptivity or selectively (in)visible figures becoming visible to remaining witnesses. Despite formal and contextual dissimilarities between these analogues and the Damascus road encounter, selective or partial (im)perceptibility by divine prerogative is congruent and affords a framework for the Lukan reader's conceptualisation of the event.

¹⁰⁵¹ E.g., Johnson 1992, 163; Talbert 2005, 86; Bock 2007, 359.

¹⁰⁵² Conzelmann 1972, 65.

¹⁰⁵³ Barrett 1994/1998, 1:451-52.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Pervo 2009, 241-42 n. 71, 564 n. 51.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Keener 2012–2015, 2:1640 n. 391.

In Wikenhauser's toppling parallels (Ezek 1:4-2:2; 3:23-24; 43:3; Dan 8:15-18; 10:9-10; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.269; 1 En. 14:8-25; 71; 4 Ezra 10:25-39; Apoc. Ab. 10; Matt 17:6; 28:4; Rev 1:17; Hom., *Od.* 24.533-36), among others in the reader's extratext, spectators turn, fall, or throw themselves down in fear or reverence rather than being blinded by luminosity or toppled by force (§§2.1.2; 3.1.2). Comparatively, Luke's reader imagines the force of Jesus' manifestation and/or radiance toppling Paul (Acts 9:4; 22:7) and his companions (26:14).¹⁰⁵⁶ The reader's detection of the remarkable absence of fear is supported by scribal attempts to reconcile the encounter with typical epiphanies by adding responses of fear (καὶ ἔμφοβοὶ ἐγένοντο, 22:9)¹⁰⁵⁷ or falling from fear (διὰ τὸν φόβον, 26:14).¹⁰⁵⁸ Not only is there silence about any emotive reaction in all three accounts, but falling is associated with abrupt radiance. Finally, none of the parallels addressed here involve blinding. In terms of Christology, the reader recognises Jesus' epiphanic power and abilities of selective and partial manifestation as characteristic of post-mortem figures or (more typically) deities in the ancient Mediterranean world.

7.2.2. Jesus the Controller: Reading Supernatural Control of Luminosity

Additional to Jesus' prerogative of selective and partial (im)perceptibility, the disparity of Paul's blindness and his companions' intact sight, despite seeing the same Christophanic light, guide the reader to conceptualise Jesus' supernatural control, an ability with variegated exhibitions in antiquity (§§2.1.2; 2.1.5; 3.1.2; 3.1.8). Jesus' control of his luminosity is implied given its absence or uninhibiting effects in other Christophanies (§7.1.2) and his control during resurrection appearances (Chapter 6). Unlike expressions of direct cognitive-perceptual control during Jesus' resurrection appearances, incongruities between the Damascus road accounts lend to inferences that Jesus controls his luminosity and/or its effectivity, without manipulating human faculties. Moreover, perceptual impairment is infrequent with ancient Mediterranean luminous epiphanies, notwithstanding Achilles' armour blinding Homer (*Vita Romana* 5) or occasional unbearableness (albeit without blindness) resulting in

¹⁰⁵⁶ Also Stählin 1962, 134, cf. 308; Roloff 1981, 149, 352; contra Polhill 1992, 234 ("awe-struck"). Pervo (2009, 241, [631]) says that Paul falls reverently, but later writes, "The party felt its power and crashed to the ground *en masse*".

¹⁰⁵⁷ E.g., D E L Ψ 614 1739 ℣ gig sy^h sa (NA²⁸, 459; Metzger 1994, 430).

¹⁰⁵⁸ E.g., 614 2147 gig sy^{hmg} sa bo^{mss} (NA²⁸, 472; Metzger 1994, 438).

deterred attention (Plutarch, *Cam.* 17.5; Paus. 2.26.5). Comparatively, Paul's blinding by epiphanic light is quite anomalous, but dominates the encounter, so Jesus is especially elusive on the Damascus road. Nevertheless, the presence of a visually impairing light not affecting Paul's companions whose experience differs in other ways indicates Jesus' control.

Reading Paul's blindness induced by Christophanic luminosity as Jesus' prerogative is supported by Jesus' active restoration of Paul's sight through Ananias' mediation whom Jesus (ὁ κύριος) directs (Acts 9:8-19a; 22:11-13). Comparatively, Yahweh opens the eyes of Elisha's servant in response to prayer to see the putative reality of a heavenly army and 'blinds' the Arameans (inferably coming from and eventually returning to Damascus) whom the prophet leads to Samaria before their cognitive-perception is restored (2 Kgs 6:17-20). Jesus does not reappear to Paul in Damascus, but utilises Ananias as a communicative proxy. Ananias is not "the miracle worker," as Hedrick asserts.¹⁰⁵⁹ Neither are blinding and healing attributable to God, as Fitzmyer surmises.¹⁰⁶⁰ Macnamara suggesting that Jesus acts in Saul through the Spirit, including restoring sight,¹⁰⁶¹ conflates the Spirit's presence (cf. 9:17) with Jesus' agency. Others emphasise Jesus' activity vis-à-vis Ananias' mediation.¹⁰⁶² Similar to the Emmaus road, perceptual impairment ensues upon Jesus' appearance who then restores perception.¹⁰⁶³ Ὁ θεός/πατήρ is markedly absent in the Damascus road accounts, aside from Ananias declaring that ὁ θεός appointed Paul 'to know his will' (γινῶναι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ) and to see and to hear Jesus (τὸν δίκαιον, Acts 22:14) or details about Paul turning Gentiles to God (ὁ θεός, 26:18, 20). However, such comments about Paul's divine appointment and mission do not detract from Jesus as the primary actor throughout and after the encounter. Walton, giving examples of Jesus' activeness during the event, briefly mentions that Jesus blinds Paul.¹⁰⁶⁴ Keener writes, "Jesus blinded the one who thought he saw, so he might see

¹⁰⁵⁹ Hedrick 1981, 422.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Fitzmyer 1998, 426.

¹⁰⁶¹ Macnamara 2016, 116-17.

¹⁰⁶² Roloff 1981, 151; Bruce 1988, 188.

¹⁰⁶³ Keener (2012–2015, 2:1665-66) observes prevalent blindness healings in antiquity, including by Jesus (Luke 4:18; 6:39-42; 7:21-22; 18:42-43).

¹⁰⁶⁴ Walton 2018, 143-44. Cf. Paul was 'apprehended/overtaken (κατελήμφοθην) by Christ' (Phil 3:12).

anew”.¹⁰⁶⁵ Nevertheless, such comments refer to Jesus’ intentionality rather than to his prerogative to allow his luminosity to blind Paul. As a result of the entire ordeal, Paul immediately proclaims Jesus as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (9:20). Jesus’ prerogative to blind and restore perception, the latter in response to prayer, is a theomorphic quality.

Nothing indicates that the light—whose effulgence outshines the sun at midday—is any less intense for Paul’s companions. Jesus spares them from blindness to guide Paul and, more importantly, to be partial witnesses. Jesus permits visibility of his epiphanic luminosity and determines its (disproportionate) effects. The reader diagnoses Paul’s blinding as a supernatural punitive feat¹⁰⁶⁶ whilst others are spared. Haenchen writes, “It would be wrong to construe it as a punishment: it is simply the natural consequence of his beholding the heavenly light (cf. 22.11)”.¹⁰⁶⁷ However, the extratext revealed that blinding is often by divine punishment, and additional examples could be enumerated.¹⁰⁶⁸ For instance, additional to instances of Epizelus (Hdt. 6.117.1-3) and Homer (*Vita Romana* 5), the Muses blind Thamyris for defiance (Hom., *Il.* 2.594-600; Ps.-Apollod., *Bib.* 1.3.3). Pheron is blinded after hurling a spear into the flooded Nile’s eddies (Hdt. 2.111; Diod. Sic. 1.59.1-4). A divine dream-vision nearly blinds Atrabanus for defying the divine will (Hdt. 7.17-18). Teiresias is blinded according to Kronos’ laws for witnessing Athene bathe (Callimachus, *Hymn. lav. Pall.* 51-102). Stesichorus is blinded for speaking ill of Helen (Plato, *Phaedr.* 243a-b). An impious Libyan is blinded for fishing in Baiae’s lake (Martial, *Epigrams* 4.30). Philip of Macedon is blinded in one eye for spying on Zeus-Ammon in serpent-form lying with his wife (Plutarch, *Alex.* 3.1-4). Polyzelus loses his sight gazing at a ‘superhuman appearance’ (ὑπεράνθρωπον φαντασίαν, Pseudo-Plutarch, *Para.* 1). Hus/Antylus is blinded for looking at the Palladium whilst sparing it from a burning shrine in Ilium, but propitiates the goddess and regains sight (*Para.* 17). Aepytus is blinded and dies after entering Poseidon’s sanctuary at Mantinea (Paus. 8.5.5). Finally, Juvenal contrasts people who believe that fortune is accidental with those

¹⁰⁶⁵ Keener 2012-2015, 2:1654.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bauernfeind 1980, 133; Hamm 1990, 65, 69-70 (referencing Luke 19:42; 24:16); Parsons 2008, 128; Peterson 2009, 305; cf. Strelan 2004, 178 (‘destructive’ connotations).

¹⁰⁶⁷ Haenchen 1971, 323. Also dismissing punitive blinding: Conzelmann 1972, 65; Roloff 1981, 150; Polhill 1992, 235; Zmijewski 1994, 380-81; Barrett 1994/1998, 1:452; Fitzmyer 1998, 426; Bock 2007, 359.

¹⁰⁶⁸ See n. 295 for scholars elaborating some of these and other examples.

who attribute matters to the gods, including blinding for perjury (*Sat.* 13.86-94). Extratextual Jewish examples included men at Sodom (Gen 19:11), the Egyptians (Wis 19:17; Mek. R. Ish. 18.4), the Arameans (2 Kgs 6:18 [figurative for cognitive]), the Amorites (LAB 27:10), the disobedient (4Q167 I 7-10 [Hos 2:8]; 4Q387a 3 II 4-5), and people at Babel (3 Bar. 3:8). Particularly, Paul's encounter may echo Deut 28:28-29 where Yahweh warns that he will smite the disobedient with frenzy, blindness, and bewilderment of mind, so they will grope around at mid-day (μεσημβρία) like the blind in darkness, unable to find their 'way' (τὰς ὁδοῦς).¹⁰⁶⁹ Ironically, Paul's expectation to bring disciples back to Jerusalem 'in order that they may be punished' (ἵνα τιμωρηθῶσιν, Acts 22:5) is reversed as Jesus, identifying corporately with his disciples, punishes Paul. Hartsock avers that the reader, considering an ancient tripartite physiognomical blindness topos, assumes Paul's helplessness, divine punishment, and spiritual blindness.¹⁰⁷⁰ According to Wilson, the reader may even see Paul's debilitating blindness (inflicted by Jesus) as emasculating, loss of self-control, and subjection to divine power as a 'slave' of God and Jesus.¹⁰⁷¹ Thus, the blinding has significant implications for Paul's character, but also contributes to Jesus' characterisation. The reader is aware that these effects do not apply to Paul's companions who see the light, so Jesus must control its efficacy, a capability preceded by ancient Mediterranean supernatural control traditions. Petridou explains how unmediated theophanies, particularly visual and lurid, can be physically or mentally debilitating for mortals (cf. Hom., *Il.* 20.128ff.), so humans avert their attention, cover their faces, or flee (e.g., Eur., *Ion* 1549-52).¹⁰⁷² Luke's reader construes Jesus as mitigating the brilliance of his glory during most Christophanies, but emanating it on the Damascus road with his unmediated appearance incapacitating Paul, but regulated to spare his companions from its debilitating effects.¹⁰⁷³

Ultimately, Jesus causes his epiphanic luminosity to blind only Paul, heals him in answer to prayer, sends him as a chosen (divinely appointed) instrument to

¹⁰⁶⁹ Lake and Cadbury 1933, 280; Marshall 1980, 355, 374.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Hartsock 2008, 188; similarly, Thomas 2010, 248-52 (God blinds Paul).

¹⁰⁷¹ Wilson 2014.

¹⁰⁷² Petridou 2015, 37-38.

¹⁰⁷³ Including regulation during resurrection appearances (see Chapter 6 on Bucur).

evangelise, and continually aids him. The reader recognises Jesus' supernatural activity and control as characteristically theomorphic.

7.3. Synthesis and Observations

In this chapter we saw how Luke's reader further builds Jesus' character as a theomorphically elusive figure in Acts, ascended-exalted and interceding from heaven. Jesus' Damascus road activity is especially elusive in Acts since it demonstrates his power whilst establishing Paul's apostleship among (partial) witnesses and is programmatic for Jesus' active presence and protection of Paul, though not of subsequent Christophanic phenomena. Ancient Mediterranean epiphanies may involve either selective or partial (im)perceptibility (at least in pre-Lukan non-Christian documents), are rarely visually impairing from radiance, and do not topple witnesses who normally fall in fear or reverence. Comparatively, Jesus manifests on the Damascus road with both selective and partial (im)perceptibility, blinding luminosity, and toppling force, cryptically revealing his identity. The reader attributes these phenomena and effects to Jesus—ὁ κύριος, who is present and active in God's narrative absence—exercising a prerogative of his (im)perceptibility whilst supernaturally controlling his luminosity.

Paul's blinding is no mere consequence of Jesus' glorious light. Rather than directly controlling perception like during resurrection appearances, Jesus allows his luminosity to blind Paul as a punitive and overpowering feat. Christophanic luminosity does not normally blind spectators, such as disciples at the transfiguration, Stephen, or Paul's companions, so differing effects occur according to Jesus' prerogative. The companions' partial witness sufficiently demonstrates the Damascus road event's objectivity, authenticity, and veracity. Contrastively, Stephen describes a Christophany to his antagonists who see nothing. Nevertheless, Christophanies occur only to Jesus-followers—withstanding Saul's exceptional transformation into an apostolic witness—but Jesus remains entirely elusive to outsiders, congruous with privacy during his ministry and resurrection appearances. Jesus simultaneously reveals and conceals himself as his paradoxical *modus operandi*. Whereas *Geheimnis*-theories cannot account for the ascended-exalted Jesus' activity, his elusiveness comprehensively encompasses his character throughout his life and afterlife, forming a broader and more comprehensive elusiveness theme.

As in my other focal episodes, speculation about Jesus' identity accompanies his elusiveness on the Damascus road. A Lukan compositional pattern emerges. The reader may emulate Paul's performative enquiry, contemplating the identity of ὁ κύριος, though beyond a formal appellation. Luke's compositional rhetoric continues to keep the reader engaged and intrigued about Jesus' identity even into Acts. Paul's proclamation of Jesus as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ partly elucidates the reader's christological speculation. For Paul and the reader, Jesus' activity is associated with his divine sonship. For Paul, this is principally about his royal-Davidic messiahship, but for the reader it also evokes his supernatural conception and exceptional relationship to God. The reader also detects God's elision from the recurrent glorious theophany motif from Acts 7. God alone appears to Abraham and Moses, then God appears with Jesus to Stephen, but Jesus alone appears to Paul. The luminous theophanic phenomenon for which Yahweh is renowned becomes a signature of Jesus.

In the next chapter we shall see how the reader's portraiture of the elusive Jesus is advanced through intratextual comparisons with other elusive characters and events throughout Luke-Acts.

CHAPTER 8

ELUSIVE ACTS OF OTHER LUKAN CHARACTERS

8.1. Comparing Luke's Elusive Jesus with Elusive Acts of the Apostles

Comparing the elusiveness of Jesus and of others in Luke-Acts will highlight contrasts between abilities and actional roles that advance and enhance the reader's portraiture of the particularly elusive Jesus. Character parallels and literary patterns within Luke-Acts abound,¹⁰⁷⁴ especially Jesus-disciple parallels,¹⁰⁷⁵ encouraging comparison and facilitating character-building. I assess the disciples' escapes or martyrdom, incarceration deliverances, mediation or petitioning of supernatural control, the Philip-eunuch story, and angelic activities (appearances, departures, and supernatural control). This comparative process will also illuminate correspondences between these accounts and my focal episodes which expand those already detected by scholars. Although scholarship abounds on potential backgrounds or intertexts for passages examined here, I primarily concentrate on the reader's intratextual comparisons of elusiveness providing additional data for characterising Jesus (ascertaining an exceptionally theomorphic Christology) and recognising an elusiveness theme.

8.1.1. Escape or Martyrdom According to Divine Sovereignty

Jesus reflexively eludes arrest, injury, or execution until his passion, unlike some of his disciples. Along with Jesus' Nazareth escape, Luke's *χείρ*-idioms and plotting motif afford depictions of Jesus' sovereignty over the time and circumstances of his destined passion (Luke 4:28-30; 9:44-45; 13:31-33; 19:47-48; 20:19-20; 22:2-3, 21-22, 53-54; 24:7-8; cf. Acts 1:16; 2:23; §5.2.6). Antagonists plot to arrest or kill disciples, seizing (including *χείρ*-terminology) and violently handling them (Acts 4:3; 5:18, 33; 9:23-24, 29; 12:1, 3, 11, 19; 16:19; 20:3, 19; 21:11, 27, 30, 33; 22:4; 23:12-14, 21, 27, 30; 25:3; 26:10, 21; 28:17; cf. Luke 21:12).¹⁰⁷⁶ For example, in Acts 4:1-

¹⁰⁷⁴ Morgenthaler 1949; Laurentin 1964; Flender 1967, 8-35; Talbert 1974; Mattill 1975; Muhlack 1979; Praeder 1984b; Neiryck 1999; Clark 2001; McComiskey 2004; Spencer 2008, 44-48.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Radl 1975; O'Toole 1983a; 1984, 62-94; Dunn 1996, xiv, *passim*; as wonder-workers or prophets like Jesus: Minear 1976, 122-47; Moessner 2016, 238-71.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Neiryck (1999) parallels Luke's Nazareth pericope with Acts (Paul: 9:19b-25; 13:4-13, 14-52; 28:17-31; Peter: 2:17-40; 3:11-26; 10:34-43).

31 the apostles are arrested, but released because the authorities fear the people. This recalls authorities desiring to arrest Jesus but not doing so because of a fear of the people (Luke 19:47-48; 20:19; 22:2). Moreover, in Acts 4:1-31 the authorities suspect that the apostles have divine support in relation to Jesus and the apostles speak of God's sovereignty with respect to their indomitability, contrasting with Jesus' reflexive hostility evasions in Luke's Gospel.

Some of the disciples are not delivered from hostility, resulting in death. Stephen's interlocutors cannot oppose τῆ σοφία καὶ τῷ πνεύματι by which he speaks (Acts 6:10), fulfilling Jesus' declarations that τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα will aid his disciples' speech (Luke 12:12) and that he will provide an unopposable στόμα καὶ σοφίαν (21:15). Jesus gives the Spirit and wisdom to them (Luke 3:16; 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4, 17-18, 33, 38; cf. Acts 6:3 [Spirit-Wisdom association]).¹⁰⁷⁷ Even τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ guides them (Acts 16:7) in unison with τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (16:6).¹⁰⁷⁸ Jesus, resembling elusive Wisdom (§§4.2.2; 5.2.4; 6.2.1), equips disciples with σοφία, making them irrefutable. Nevertheless, Stephen is rejected and stoned in Jerusalem (7:1-8:2). The description ἐκβαλόντες ἔξω τῆς πόλεως (7:58) links this to expulsions of Jesus from Nazareth (ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, Luke 4:29), Paul and Barnabas from Pisidian Antioch (ἐξέβαλον αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων αὐτῶν, Acts 13:50), and Paul from Lystra (ἔσυρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, 14:19).¹⁰⁷⁹ James cannot escape Herod's order of execution by sword (12:1-2). Since disputants cannot gainsay the disciples, persecution follows, but evasion in every instance would preclude martyrological illustrations. These accounts are analeptic of Jesus' warning that discipleship may cost suffering and death (Luke 9:23-27; 14:26-27; cf. Acts 14:22).

Other disciples suffer, but evade death.¹⁰⁸⁰ Jesus predicted that arrests, beatings, and incarcerations would befall disciples (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-19). Jesus and Paul begin Spirit-filled ministries preaching in synagogues (4:14-16; Acts 9:19-

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cf. ὁ θεός/πατήρ giving the Spirit (Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Jesus administers and works through the Spirit in ways reserved for Yahweh (Turner 1982; 1994; 2000).

¹⁰⁷⁹ See n. 642; Neiryck 1999, 374-75. Pervo (2009, 196 n. 4) notes additional Jesus-Stephen similarities: ἀκούοντες [δὲ] ταῦτα (Luke 4:28; Acts 7:54); Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 7:55); and grace (Luke 4:22; Acts 6:8). Jesus' passion parallels Stephen's execution (Tannehill 1986/1990, 2:99-100, 114; Talbert, 2005, 66-68). Clark (2001, 264-67) offers parallels between, *inter alia*, the childhood, Nazareth, and Emmaus episodes and Stephen.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Pervo (1987, 12-57) offers thirty-three endangerment-resolution accounts in Acts (usually Paul delivered by divine providence).

20 [Jesus as God's Son]), astonishing audiences who question their identities (Luke 4:22; Acts 9:21), and escaping animosity (Luke 4:28-30; Acts 9:22-25).¹⁰⁸¹ Radl details a *synkrisis* between Jesus in Nazareth and Paul in Pisidian Antioch (13:14-52),¹⁰⁸² but the reader also notes variances. Jesus' identity is pondered and he escapes execution after expulsion, underscoring his elusiveness compared to Paul whose identity goes unquestioned, who speaks of Jesus' Davidic and divine sonship, and who non-miraculously departs after expulsion. Jesus' departures and escapes from resistance (Luke 4:28-30; 8:37; 9:5, 51-56; 10:5-6, 10-12) foreshadow the same for Paul (Acts 13:50-51; 14:6; 17:10, 14),¹⁰⁸³ though with Jesus' aid (§7.1.2). Jesus promises to be with Paul and to protect him (Acts 18:10), directs him to flee (22:17-21), and reassures him of survival (23:10-11; cf. 9:15-16; 26:16-18), despite encountering 'fetters and tribulations' (δεσμὰ καὶ θλίψεις, 20:23). Paul, pneumatically empowered, does not reflexively escape peril. Even when antagonists 'closely watch' and plot to kill him (Acts 9:24), reminiscent of Jesus (παρατηρέω: Luke 6:7; 14:1; 20:20; cf. Ps 36:12), disciples lower him through a window in a basket at night (Acts 9:25) resembling OT accounts (Jos 2:15 [cf. 2:3]; 1 Sam 19:10-12).¹⁰⁸⁴ Paralleling this, disciples aid Paul's escape again when Hellenists seek to kill him in Jerusalem (9:29-30).¹⁰⁸⁵ Paul's evasions by Jesus' sovereignty accord with promised preservation.

The Lycaonians identifying Paul and Barnabas as ostensible visiting gods, then stoning Paul who is passively safeguarded (Acts 14:8-13), contrasts with Jesus as a true divine visitor reflexively escaping harm at Nazareth, a connection enhanced when read as a programmatic theoxenic episode (§5.2.1). The Lystra account bears intertextual marks of the Phrygian Baucis-Philemon tale (Ovid, *Metam.* 8.612-724). Lycaonians acquainted with the Ovidian tradition would avoid another negative theoxeny; thus, supposing Paul and Barnabas to be incognito Hermes/Mercury and

¹⁰⁸¹ Esler 1987, 235 n. 39; Neiryck 1999, 359-63.

¹⁰⁸² Radl 1975, 82-100; followed by Neiryck 1999, 365-75; Macnamara 2016, 338-40.

¹⁰⁸³ Tannehill 1986/1990, 2:224.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Cf. 2 Cor 11:32-33 exemplifying weakness (Johnson 1992, 172), including a 'basket' and χεῖρ-idiom.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Compare: Acts 9:13-25/9:26-30 (Gill 1974); 9:19b-25/Luke 4:16-30 (Neiryck 1999, 359-63).

Zeus/Jupiter (respectively), they attempt to reverence them with sacrifices.¹⁰⁸⁶ The apostles forbidding this reverence causes the Lycaonians to stone Paul and expel his apparent corpse (ἔσυρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέναι), but after disciples encircle him, he arises, enters the city, then departs with Barnabas for Derbe the next day (14:19-20).¹⁰⁸⁷ Declaration that gods descended anthropomorphically (οἱ θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις κατέβησαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, 14:11) confirms knowledge of the theoxenic trope. The reader detects parallels of receptiveness turned to hostility,¹⁰⁸⁸ expulsion, escape and inviolability, and resumed preaching elsewhere.¹⁰⁸⁹ However, Paul is assaulted whereas Jesus avoids harm.¹⁰⁹⁰ Similar to Jesus' evasion, Paul's survival features a narrative gap ambiguating his condition, recovery, and ability to enter the city, then begin an arduous journey the following day (approximately 60 miles/97 km),¹⁰⁹¹ despite being presumed deceased. Readings of human aid¹⁰⁹² or minor injuries¹⁰⁹³ do not detract from divine preservation. Nevertheless, the narrator opts not to depict human assistance, unlike elsewhere (cf. 9:8; 21:35),¹⁰⁹⁴ and Paul is preserved according to Jesus' promises, though not evading inflicted maltreatment unlike Jesus' visitation. The Nazareth-Lystra parallel emphasises the difference between real and ascribed theoxenies.

Unlike Jesus' cognisance of thoughts¹⁰⁹⁵ or transcendent heavenly knowledge¹⁰⁹⁶ and unaided hostility evasions, Paul receives information and assistance to evade opposition. After his nephew discloses a plotted ambush, the

¹⁰⁸⁶ Marshall 1980, 237; Denaux 1999, 264-65; MacDonald (2015a, 267-69; 2019, 154-56) adds Odysseus presumed to be a god (Hom., *Od.* 16.172-303). Whether Ovid is dependent on Gen 18-19 (Griffin 1991, 68-70) or not (Leigh 2002), or traditions preserved in Ovid influenced Gen 18-19 (Gnuse 2017), these traditions probably influenced the Lukan Emmaus and Lystra episodes (Lohse 1961, 31-32), though less clear in the former.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Cf. Paul's stoning and scars (2 Cor 11:25; Gal 6:17).

¹⁰⁸⁸ Marshall 1980, 239.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Eckey 2011, 1:403.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Foakes-Jackson 1931, 128-29 (though non-miraculously); Klauck 2000, 61.

¹⁰⁹¹ Dunn 1996, 192.

¹⁰⁹² Johnson 1992, 253; cf. Tannehill 1986/1990, 2:180.

¹⁰⁹³ Fitzmyer 1998, 533.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Pervo 2009, 360 n. 109.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Bullard 2015 ('*Herzenskenntnis*' in antiquity and Luke 2:34-35; 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 7:36-50; 9:46-48; 11:14-32).

¹⁰⁹⁶ Gathercole 2006, 50-53 (Luke 10:18-21; 22:31-32).

tribune orders an overnight military escort to accompany him to Caesarea (23:12-35). The timely and substantial security indicates divine orchestration coinciding with Jesus' promise the previous night (23:11). Paul is informed about other plots (20:3, 19), occasioning escape. Jews accusing him of bringing a Gentile into the temple sieze him (ἐπέβαλον ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὰς χεῖρας, 21:27; ἐπιλαβόμενοι, 21:30), drag him outside (εἴλκον αὐτὸν ἔξω τοῦ ἱεροῦ), and seek to kill him (ζητούντων... ἀποκτεῖναι, 21:31), smiting (τύπτοντες, 21:32) him until the tribune seizes him (ἐπελάβετο, 21:33). This verbiage recalls hostility towards Jesus who is neither captured nor harmed until wilfully surrendering (§5.2.6), but Paul is repeatedly apprehended and assaulted.

Another ascribed theoxeny occurs when the Maltese surmise Paul's divinity who arrives shipwrecked at Malta then survives snakebite (28:1-6),¹⁰⁹⁷ contrasting with Jesus as a true divine visitor evading harm. Paul cannot prevent the bite or death, but is preserved. Despite the polytheistic Maltese deducing Paul's divinity from his theomorphic exhibitions (like the Lycaonians), the reader knows that he is a human, divinely safeguarded,¹⁰⁹⁸ potentially by Jesus' bestowed authority (cf. Luke 10:17-19).¹⁰⁹⁹ Comparatively, despite the Nazarenes supposing that Jesus is merely Joseph's son, the reader recognises his divine sonship and miraculous self-deliverance in a [virtual] theoxenic episode (§5.2.1). Thus, reading divine causality with Paul vitiates Longenecker's interpretation of divine causality with Jesus' Nazareth escape.¹¹⁰⁰

Jesus' elusive presence remains consistent between Luke's Gospel and Acts. Nevertheless, his operational mode becomes increasingly theomorphic in Acts which

¹⁰⁹⁷ See Jipp 2013, 253-87. Shipwreck was a common motif and peril (see nn. 204-205; 2 Cor 11:25-27; Keener 2012-2015, 4:3556-70).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Roloff 1981, 367; Weiser 1981/1985, 2:669; Jervell 1998, 616. Despite humans controlling serpents or other animals (e.g., Adam, Seth, Abram, Moses, R. Hanina ben Dosa, Pythagoras, Apollonius; see Keener 2012-2015, 4:3673-75; cf. LEM 16:18), the Maltese do not deem Paul a 'θεῖος ἀνὴρ' (contra Conzelmann 1972, 157), but ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν (Acts 28:6); they think of familiar deities (Bauernfeind 1980, 277), supposing that ἡ δίκη—a supramundane entity/deity (cf. Dickey 1996, 187-88)—would not permit survival (28:4).

¹⁰⁹⁹ Spencer 2004, 245. Unlike in the Lystra account, it is unapparent that Paul is aware of the Maltese's comments to one another about him being a murderer (πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔλεγον, Acts 28:4) or when changing their minds and deeming him a god (μεταβαλλόμενοι ἔλεγον αὐτὸν εἶναι θεόν, 28:6). Their comments are mainly communicated to the reader and they are depicted as conversing with one another and observing Paul, not making these comments to him or to his knowledge. Comparatively, in Lystra people shout that the apostles are visiting gods and attempt to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas who become aware and try to resist veneration (14:11-18).

¹¹⁰⁰ Contra Longenecker 2012, 59; see §5.1.2.

focuses on the disciples' activities whilst his interventions and aid from heaven imply sovereignty much like God's in the Gospel which focuses on Jesus' activities. Rather than an 'absentee Christology' of Acts in which Jesus is in heaven whilst his disciples speak of his past accomplishments and future parousia,¹¹⁰¹ the reader's comparisons support Jesus' active presence and sovereignty.¹¹⁰² Numerous scholars (Marshall, Buckwalter, O'Toole, and Walton, among others) see Jesus' active presence evident by Jesus-Yahweh parallels or Yahwistic activities predicated of him (extending from the Gospel), including activities of disciples towards him such as his name being invoked or receiving prayer and worship, suggesting his equality or shared-identity with Yahweh.¹¹⁰³ Spencer writes, "The risen-ascended Jesus remains an active, independent character in Acts, intervening at will in human affairs. The apostles may preach and heal in Jesus' name, but they do not replace or replicate Jesus".¹¹⁰⁴ Contrasting the elusiveness of Jesus and disciples portrays him as exceptionally theomorphic and proximate to God, though 'equality' is less apparent.

8.1.2. Incarceration Deliverances

Incarcerated disciples are divinely liberated by angels (Acts 5:17-20; 12:1-11) and seismic activity (16:25-26).¹¹⁰⁵ The apostles' hands of thaumaturgic mediation (διά... τῶν χειρῶν, 5:12) become powerless when their antagonists' hands seize and imprison them (ἐπέβαλον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπί, 5:18). An ἄγγελος κυρίου¹¹⁰⁶ opens jail

¹¹⁰¹ E.g., Conzelmann 1960, 170-206; Moule 1968; MacRae 1973; Zwiap 1997, 171-85 (but cf. 2016, 17-18); see summaries in Sleeman 2009, 12-18; Walton 2016, 123-25.

¹¹⁰² See Fletcher-Louis' (1997, 20-27) review. Similarly, God in Acts is perceivable through governing sovereignty, power, and actions (Cheng 2011; Aarflot 2020).

¹¹⁰³ Marshall 1988, 179-82; Buckwalter 1996, 173-205; 1998; O'Toole 2008, 181-224; cf. 1981; Walton 2016; 2018.

¹¹⁰⁴ Spencer 2008, 45. Cadbury (1958, 37, 303-306) sees divine guidance/control pervading Luke-Acts.

¹¹⁰⁵ Many suggested parallels (Weiser 1981/1985, 1:284-86; Pervo 1979, 54-90; 1987, 18-24, 147; 2009, 142, 301-302, 409-411; see Keener 2012-2015, 2:1209-1212, cf. 2:1882-91, 3:2488-97) do not involve divine intervention, are late, or depend on Acts (rightly Strelan 2004, 260), e.g.: Acts of Thomas (Reitzenstein 1906, 120-22); Apollonius (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 7.38; 8.30). Some 'Befreiungswunder' parallels are older, e.g., Dionysian liberation myths (Weinreich 1929; Kratz 1979, 444-99) intertextually reflected in Artapanus' Moses account (*fr.* 3 in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.27.23; Weaver 2004, 64-78; Friesen 2015, 136-48). Although these resemble Acts, including purposes of divinely validated movements (Weaver 2004), direct dependency is indeterminate.

¹¹⁰⁶ Characterisation of [ὁ] ἄγγελος κυρίου/θεοῦ in Acts (5:19-23; 8:26; 10:3-7, 22; 12:7-11, 23; 27:23-26) comports with Jewish traditions by designating divine presence, personification, or agency, thus an angelomorphism of ὁ κύριος (Jesus/God) (see §3.1.3; Strelan 2004, 85-86, 123 [citing

doors (ἀνοίξας τὰς θύρας τῆς φυλακῆς), leads them out (ἐξαγαγών, 5:19), and commands them to ‘proceed’ (πορεύεσθε) to the temple to preach (5:20; cf. 5:41). Prominent Jewish traditions involve Yahweh’s orchestrated angelic deliverance, such as with Lot (Gen 19:15-23) and the exodus (Exod 12:23; cf. 3:17-22; 7:4; 14:19; Num 20:16; Acts 7:36, 40; 13:17),¹¹⁰⁷ often employing ἐξάγω like incarceration deliverances in Acts (5:19; 12:17; 16:39).¹¹⁰⁸ The empty jail, superfluously left fully secured and guarded with shut doors, perplexes authorities who locate the apostles (5:21-28). The escapees have no reason, time, or ability to resecure the site. Rather, this enhances implied supernatural activity. The reader conceptualises the ἄγγελος κυρίου impairing guards or rendering absconders invisible and inaudible to vacate unnoticed.¹¹⁰⁹ Rather than killing the apostles, the council flogs and releases them according to Gamaliel’s advice that their mission will either fail or be inexorable depending on God’s will (5:29-42). Ironically, the apostles perform signs and wonders through their hands, but are incapable of avoiding their antagonists’ violent hands (unlike Jesus). Their reliance on divine deliverance through angelic supernatural control underscores their humanity and passivity.

Herod seizes (ἐπέβαλεν... τὰς χεῖρας) and harms disciples (12:1). After killing James, he arrests (πιάσας, 12:4)¹¹¹⁰ and securely jails Peter during Passover (12:2-5).¹¹¹¹ The narrator illustrates the impossibility of escape (like Jesus’ Nazareth

Philo, *Somn.* 1.238-39]; Weaver 2004, 96-101) or a chief angelic representative (Fletcher-Louis 1997, 50-51); cf. as Gabriel (Luke 1:11, 19; cf. 2:9, 15 [οἱ ἄγγελοι]); interchange with [τὸ] πνεῦμα [κυρίου] (Acts 8:26-40); spirits and angels speaking (23:9; cf. Heb 1:14); Peter’s ἄγγελος as his representation or guardian (Acts 12:15); τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ and τὸ πνεῦμα [τὸ ἅγιον] functioning similarly in narrative proximity (16:6-7); manifestations of τὸ πνεῦμα (11:12; 13:2-4) and ὁ κύριος (Jesus/God: Damascus road; 9:10-20, 27; 10:9-16, 28; 11:4-8; 18:9; 22:17-22; 23:11); an ἄγγελος (instead of Jesus) appearing to Paul (27:23-26). Interchangeability reveals affinities whilst conveying variability.

¹¹⁰⁷ See §§3.1.4; 3.1.8; 5.1.2; examples in Keener 2012–2015, 2:1210.

¹¹⁰⁸ Pervo 2009, 143 (exodus traditions).

¹¹⁰⁹ Although Pervo (2009, 143) comments that readers infer angelic control (including sleep) or discover the engineering when reading Peter’s deliverance (12:6-10), they must imagine control there too.

¹¹¹⁰ Πιάζω conveys ‘grasping’ (Acts 3:7), ‘capturing’/‘catching’ (Song 2:15; Rev 19:20), or ‘seizing’/‘arresting’ (Sir 23:21; 2 Cor 11:32), notably of John’s elusive Jesus (7:30, 32, 44; 8:20; 10:39; 11:57; 21:3, 10).

¹¹¹¹ Fulfilling Luke 22:33 (cf. Acts 5:18). Tannehill (1986/1990, 2:151-58) sees an exodus typology and parallels to Jesus’ passion and resurrection (Luke 22-23); similarly, Garrett 1990, 670-77; Strelan 2004, 263-73; Weaver (2004, 191-94) advocates a broader exodus *mythos* common to liberation miracles. MacDonald (2003, 123-51; 2015a, 117-23; 2015b, 163-64; 2019, 142-52) argues instead for imitation of Priam’s deliverance from Achilles with Hermes paralleling the angel (Hom., *Il.* 24; cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 4.238-594). However, parallels are tenuous and unsequenced with significant

predicament; §5.1), detailing that Peter falls asleep between two soldiers, bound with two chains, whilst jailers guard the door (12:6).¹¹¹² However, at night an ἄγγελος κυρίου appears (ἐπέστη) with a shining light (φῶς ἔλαμψεν, 12:7), smites Peter, commands him to arise, ‘and the chains fell away from his hands’ (καὶ ἐξέπεσαν αὐτοῦ αἱ ἀλύσεις ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν, 12:7). Peter gets dressed and follows the angel as commanded (12:8), but is in a somnolent state, not realising everything is ‘real’/‘true’ (ἀληθές), thinking he sees an ὄραμα (12:9).¹¹¹³ Their movement διελθόντες guards in an escape moving εἰς τὴν πόλιν (12:10)—implying Peter’s incarceration outside the city—strongly evokes Jesus’ escape διελθὼν antagonists ἔξω τῆς πόλεως (Luke 4:29-30; §5.1). The gate automatically opens (αὐτομάτη ἠνοίγη, Acts 12:10). Automatic door/gate accounts or liberation miracles in antiquity, whether classified as *Gattungen*,¹¹¹⁴ are ultimately attributable to supernatural control (§§2.1.5; 3.1.8). For instance, gods easily unfasten Odysseus’ bonds in his [invented] imprisonment tale (Hom., *Od.* 14.348-49), a divine deliverance credible in the Homeric storyworld. Peter and the angel remain undetected despite chained guards, a watch, shining light, smiting, dressing, verbal commands, falling shackles, opening doors, and exiting. The reader imagines the angel manipulating guards or making Peter undetectable,¹¹¹⁵ thinking of gods becoming selectively (in)visible and making mortals undetectable (without mists), controlling perception,¹¹¹⁶ or imposing sleep (§§2.1.4; 2.1.5; 3.1.4; 3.1.8).¹¹¹⁷ The angel departs (Acts 12:10) and Peter realises that [ὁ] κύριος sent his angel to deliver him from Herod’s χειρός against expectations (12:11). The angel’s sudden reflexive vanishing (εὐθέως ἀπέστη ὁ ἄγγελος ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ) followed by Peter’s

features lacking (Weaver 2004, 153-54; Keener 2012–2015, 2:1866 n. 7, 1886 n. 183).

Correspondences in Acts nevertheless evoke broader liberation-miracle and supernatural control categories.

¹¹¹² Four squads of soldiers (Philo, *Flacc.* 13.111; Vegetius, *De re militari* 3.8) and prisoners chained to guards (Seneca, *Ep.* 5.7; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.196) are realistic precautionary measures (Conzelmann 1972, 77-78).

¹¹¹³ Due to ambiguities and portentous functions of dream-visions, the narrator clarifies this as an external, epiphanic, divine intervention (Weaver 2004, 166-72).

¹¹¹⁴ See Weinreich 1929; Joachim Jeremias, “θύρα,” *TDNT* 3:175-76; Kratz 1979.

¹¹¹⁵ Also Conzelmann 1972, 78; Roloff 1981, 190; Zmijewski 1994, 463.

¹¹¹⁶ Also Keener 2012–2015, 2:1885-86, 1890 n. 229 (‘selective visibility’: Acts 9:7; 10:41; 12:23; 27:23; controlled perception: Luke 24:16, 31); however, Acts 10:41 is private revelation, not visibility.

¹¹¹⁷ Haenchen 1971, 384 n. 3, 390 (sleep).

realisation (implying prior limited comprehension alleviated at the angel's departure) recalls Jesus' reflexive Emmaus disappearance followed by his disciples' recognition (Luke 24:31-32; §6.2). Herod's χεῖρ (Acts 12:1, 11) contrasts with the Lord's power and Peter's helpless χειρῶν (12:7). Peter motions to others 'by hand' (τῆ χειρὶ) to remain silent, relays how ὁ κύριος freed him, and departs (ἐπορεύθη, 12:17). Foregrounded or reduplicated χεῖρ-terminology creates irony: Herod's oppressive hands incapacitate Peter's thaumaturgic hands until liberated by the Lord's sovereignty. The identity of [ὁ] κύριος (God¹¹¹⁸ or Jesus¹¹¹⁹) is deliberately ambiguous. Herod's search and inability to find Peter (ἐπιζητήσας... μὴ εὐρών, 12:18) recalls the seeking-finding motif applied to Jesus (§4.2.2). Although ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου accomplishes the deliverance, Peter credits ὁ κύριος who orchestrates it.¹¹²⁰ Peter's passivity and dependability¹¹²¹ contrasts with ease of divine supernatural elusive activity.

In the third episode, a slave-girl's owners seize (ἐπιλαβόμενοι) Paul and Silas and drag (εἴλκυσαν) them into the agora where they are attacked, stripped, and flogged, suffering many wounds, then securely jailed (16:19-23). Again, the narrator underlines the infeasibility of escape as the jailer casts (ἔβαλεν) them in an inner (ἑσωτέραν) jail, fastening (ἠσφαλίσατο) their feet in stocks (16:24).¹¹²² A great earthquake (σεισμὸς μέγας) suddenly occurs around midnight after they pray and sing to God (16:25), so the prison's foundations are shaken (σαλευθῆναι), all the doors immediately open (ἠνεώχθησαν), and fetters are unfastened (ἀνέθη, 16:26). Considering the previous angelic deliverances, seismic activity conveys a theophanic presence¹¹²³ affecting foundations, opening doors, and loosening chains,¹¹²⁴ not a common tremor opening "clumsy doors" to a "primitive house of detention"¹¹²⁵ or

¹¹¹⁸ O'Neill 1955, 159; Haenchen 1971, 384.

¹¹¹⁹ Stählin 1962, 169.

¹¹²⁰ Marguerat 2004, 89-91.

¹¹²¹ Stählin 1962, 168; Haenchen 1971, 390; Jervell 1998, 333-34.

¹¹²² On chaining methods and securities see Rapske 1994, 206-209.

¹¹²³ Cf. Luke 21:11, 26; Acts 4:31; 1 Kgs 19:11-12; Pss 17:7; 18:7-9; 47:5; 81:5; 96:4; 98:1; Mic 1:4; Ovid, *Metam.* 9.782-83; 15.669-78; Lucian, *Philops.* 22 (rightly Johnson 1992, 300; Parsons 2008, 233; cf. van der Horst 1989, 44-46).

¹¹²⁴ Haenchen 1971, 497; Roloff 1981, 247; Weaver 2004, 266.

¹¹²⁵ Contra Foakes-Jackson 1931, 155.

detaching fetters from walls which remain on prisoners' arms and legs.¹¹²⁶ These effects which free every inmate are superfluous, further implying divine activity. The jailer shows Paul and Silas hospitality, informs them of their release, then tells Paul to proceed (πορεύεσθε) in peace (16:27-36).

Dionysus miraculously frees bacchants (Eur., *Bacch.* 443-50; cf. 346-57) and is responsible for his own 'palace-miracle' escape (585ff.; 614; 642-643),¹¹²⁷ though he is never bound or shackled (616-22; cf. 510-19). At least since Origen (*Cels.* 2.34), readers and critics of the incarceration deliverances in Acts have noticed correlates with Dionysian liberations.¹¹²⁸ Dionysus' and Jesus' self-deliverances differ from the bacchants' and apostles' passive liberations. Theissen identifies the bacchants' escape as an epiphanic rescue similar to angelophanic liberations (Acts 5; 12), but likens Dionysus' self-escape (proving divinity) to Paul and Silas' numinous power (Acts 16).¹¹²⁹ However, the disciples may mediate or petition numinous power (highlighted below in §8.1.3), but are impotent and reliant on divine deliverance when incarcerated.¹¹³⁰ Jesus' pneumatic empowerment anticipates the same for his disciples (Luke 1:32-35; 3:16-22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21-22; 12:11-12; 21:15; 24:49; Acts 1:2; 2:22, 33), but they are not granted unmediated preternatural abilities. Comparatively, Jesus' reflexive/active elusiveness further reveals his supramundane identity.

Accounts of the disciples' arrests, beatings, and imprisonments fulfil Jesus' proclamations (Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-19),¹¹³¹ and their elusiveness conveys divine assistance, ultimately preserving the gospel. Similar to the rhetorical stylisation of Jesus' Nazareth escape (§5.1), these narratives build suspense and underscore seemingly infeasible escape, depicting endangered, surrounded, helpless protagonists. The *Reisenotiz* πορεύομαι marks the journey motif as disciples follow in Jesus' footsteps by 'proceeding' onward with the gospel after evading death (Acts 5:20, 41;

¹¹²⁶ Contra Marshall 1980, 272; Bruce 1988, 317.

¹¹²⁷ Cf. Ovid, *Metam.* 3.699-701.

¹¹²⁸ Among others: Weinreich 1929; Stählin 1962, 220; Weaver 2004, passim; Lüdemann 2005, 216-17; MacDonald 2015b, 38-48, 64-65; 2019, 110-11, 167-71.

¹¹²⁹ Contra Theissen (2007, 101-103), the jailer does not call them κύριοι believing they have delivering power (16:30), but respectfully submitting to their direction.

¹¹³⁰ Luke-Acts denies deliverances by 'magic' (Reimer 2003; see n. 725).

¹¹³¹ Cf. 4:18 (including literal release).

12:17; 16:36).¹¹³² Still, Jesus' reflexive evasion and sovereignty over his arrest and suffering (§5.2.6) contrast with disciples being seized, harmed, imprisoned, or killed, and relying on divine guidance, deliverance, and preservation (including by Jesus).

8.1.3. Apostolic Mediators or Petitioners of Divine Supernatural Control

The reader and characters recognise authority and power given to Jesus' envoys who proclaim demise, though not executing supernatural effects on dissidents. To be sure, proclaiming or executing demise is not necessarily elusive, but ambiguities in Lukan accounts imply supramundane involvement and evoke intratextual comparison with Jesus' supernatural control which is occasionally performed for elusiveness.¹¹³³ The reader encounters three notable accounts indicating the pneumatically empowered apostles' mediation or petitioning of supernatural control which is executed by divine causality. These episodes actually contribute to God as an elusive yet active character in Acts.

Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira for non-conformance and they suddenly die (Acts 5:1-11).¹¹³⁴ This case is most ambiguous, but emphasis on activity of Satan and the Spirit to whom they lie and test (5:3, 9) points to divine execution through human mediation, which becomes evident with similar pronouncements. Peter also reproaches Simon Magus due to his inappropriate (monetary) motivations for obtaining and transferring the Spirit, pronounces his destruction, and tells him to beseech the Lord for forgiveness, leading Simon to ask Peter to beseech the Lord on his behalf so that nothing declared will befall him (8:9-25). Their dialogue leaves no doubt about apostolic reliance on ὁ κύριος who ultimately destroys or exonerates. Finally, Paul facilitates punitive blinding of Bar-Jesus/Elymas (13:6-12) by pronouncing that 'the Lord's hand' (χεῖρ κυρίου)¹¹³⁵ is against him and he 'will be

¹¹³² Cf. διέρχομαι (12:10).

¹¹³³ See n. 186.

¹¹³⁴ Similar stories abound: Achan (Josh 7:1-26) (Bruce 1988, 102-103); Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1-7); Abijah (1 Kgs 14); Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6-7; cf. 1 Chron 13:9-10) (Dunn 1996, 62-64); Spirit-filled Daniel declaring divine judgment upon two false witnesses (Sus 45-60) (Pesch 1986, 1:196-97); Adam and Eve (Gen 3) (Marguerat 2004, 155-78); Korahites (Num 16:30-33); opposers of Elijah (2 Kgs 1:10, 12), Elisha (2 Kgs 2:23-24), and others (Exod 32:35; Num 14:37; 16:35; 21:6; 25:9) (Keener 2012-2015, 2:1193); including Graeco-Roman and later Jewish punitive miracles (Weiser 1981/1985, 1:140-42; cf. Havelaar 1997).

¹¹³⁵ Χεῖρ κυρίου here recalls Moses and Aaron versus Pharaoh's 'magicians' (Exod 7:4-5, 17; 9:3) (Dunn 1996, 177), God's opposition (Jdg 2:15) (Johnson 1992, 224; also Deut 2:15; 1 Sam 5:6, 9;

blind, not seeing (ἔση τυφλὸς μὴ βλέπων) the sun until an appointed time’, so that ‘a mist and darkness’ (ἀγλὸς καὶ σκότος) fall upon him and he seeks ‘guidance by hand’ (χειραγωγούς) (13:11).¹¹³⁶ The mist motif here is obvious, which commonly emerges in the extratext for perceptual inhibition (Hom., *Il.* 5.127-28; Apoll. Rhod. 4.1361-62 [cf. 1330]; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.56-57 [cf. 2 Kgs 6:17]; 2 En. [A] [J] 67:1-3), but also contrasts with its absence elsewhere in Luke-Acts, especially with Jesus’ elusiveness. Paul’s pronouncement as a type of ‘judgment oracle’ (inspired prophetic speech: Num 23-24; 1 Kgs 13:4; 2 Kgs 1:10-12; cf. Exod 7:17; 2 Chron 12:5)¹¹³⁷ or probable allusion to Yahwistic affliction in Deut 28:28-29 and related traditions (29:19-20/20-21 HB; 1QS 2:11-19)¹¹³⁸ further supports God’s causality. Ultimately, χεῖρ κυρίου specifies God’s execution,¹¹³⁹ a reading reinforced by God working wonders through the pneumatically empowered apostle elsewhere (Acts 19:8-20) and consonant with ancient divine-induced blindness traditions.¹¹⁴⁰

Roloff boldly determines that God is the doer with every manifestation of the Spirit, so the disciples are instruments (cf. 3:2-16).¹¹⁴¹ Garrett’s understanding is more nuanced, conceiving works of δύναμις by Jesus or authority-wielding disciples as a flowing material substance always personally and deliberately sourced in God’s active agency whose Spirit confirms proclamations (Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:39, 46; 9:43; cf. Acts 2:22; 4:30-31; 5:12-16; 9:12; 10:38; 19:11-12).¹¹⁴² Her definition of a spoken ‘curse’ likewise includes [usually explicit] reliance on supramundane causal agency (divine/demonic; cf. Luke 10:11; Acts 8:20; 13:11; 23:3; 1 Cor 5:4-5).¹¹⁴³

Ruth 1:13), or divine judgment (1 Sam 4:8; 2 Sam 24:14//1 Chron 21:13; Ps 75:8; Isa 25:10; 40:2; 51:17; Jer 25:17; 51:7; Hab 2:16; Amos 1:8; 2 Macc 7:31); cf. divine favour (Luke 1:66; Acts 11:21), creation (Job 12:9; Isa 41:20), and general sovereignty (Pro 21:1; Eccl 2:24; 9:1; Sir 10:4-5).

¹¹³⁶ Paul, blinded for insolence, is instrumental in blinding Elymas for similar reasons, accounts linked by several details, including being hand-led (χειραγωγέω: 9:8; 22:11; χειραγωγός: 13:8) (Garrett 1989, 84-85).

¹¹³⁷ So Keener 2012–2015, 2:2022-23.

¹¹³⁸ So Garrett 1989, 82-83.

¹¹³⁹ Roloff 1981, 199; Zmijewski 1994, 489-90.

¹¹⁴⁰ See §7.2.2.

¹¹⁴¹ Roloff 1981, 136, cf. 94-95.

¹¹⁴² Garrett 1989, 65-66, 73-74, 77, 142 nn. 20-21.

¹¹⁴³ Kent (2017) promotes emic categorisation as curses with legitimate acts of divine power, superior to social deviants’ (ill)legitimate ‘magic’/‘curses’. The apostles are nevertheless incapable of executing effects.

McCabe sees these episodes exemplifying effective imprecations executed by the vehicle of the deputised apostles' performative prophetic speech acts sanctioned/undergirded by divine authority.¹¹⁴⁴ The reader may see demise executed in this fashion, or perhaps more directly by divine causality,¹¹⁴⁵ including apostles mediating or petitioning divine power. Mills understands Jesus as endowed with cosmic power through the Spirit, performing wonders by his own authority (Luke 5:17; Acts 10:38) whereas his disciples work wonders by his authority/power in his name symbiotic with the Spirit's presence.¹¹⁴⁶ According to Kahl, Jesus is an independent 'bearer of numinous power' (BNP; God is the ultimate BNP) whereas the disciples are 'mediators of numinous power' (MNP) or 'petitioners of numinous power' (PNP), reliant on the ascended-exalted Jesus as a transcendent BNP.¹¹⁴⁷ Comparatively, though Jesus and the disciples are empowered by the Spirit, Jesus' unmediated supernatural control (often for elusiveness) corroborates his own causal agency.

8.1.4. The Philip-Eunuch Story

Correspondences between the Philip-eunuch story (Acts 8:26-40) and my focal episodes prompt reader comparisons, further emphasising Jesus' reflexive/active elusiveness in contrast to Philip's passivity by divine causality, especially considering their phenomenal departures. An ἄγγελος κυρίου commands Philip to arise and proceed (ἀνάστηθι καὶ πορεύου) to a wilderness road from Jerusalem towards Gaza (8:26), so Philip, 'arising, proceeded' (ἀναστὰς ἐπορεύθη, 8:27). Τὸ πνεῦμα commands Philip to join a travelling eunuch,¹¹⁴⁸ so Philip runs to his chariot, enquiring about his reading, and the eunuch invites him to sit (8:27-31). The eunuch needs someone to guide (ὀδηγήσει) him about Isa 53:7-8, and Philip proclaims Jesus (8:30-35). Misunderstanding continues in Acts with the disciples

¹¹⁴⁴ McCabe 2011, 148-62.

¹¹⁴⁵ E.g., Stählin 1962, 84, 177. Shauf (2015, 250-59) broadly employs 'divine control' for God's sovereignty and orchestration, including through apostolic miracles.

¹¹⁴⁶ Mills 1990, 109-123; similarly, Klutz 1999.

¹¹⁴⁷ Kahl 1994, 81-84, 111-19, 226-28; cf. Rowe 2006, 96-97. For others, this does not indicate Jesus' divine identity (e.g., Kirk 2016, 486-88; following Eve 2002, 376-86).

¹¹⁴⁸ Interchange between ἄγγελος κυρίου and [τὸ] πνεῦμα [κυρίου] evinces similar agencies (Barrett 1994/1998, 1:422, 427, 434) without coalescence; Keener (2012-2015, 2:1581) notes appeals to multiple confirmations (Acts 10:19; 11:12); see n. 1106.

responsible for elucidating the gospel and with expressions that Jewish and Gentile ignorance led to Jesus' suffering.¹¹⁴⁹ After the eunuch's baptism (8:36, 38),¹¹⁵⁰ upon arising from the water, 'The Spirit of the Lord seized (πνεῦμα κυρίου ἤρπασεν) Philip and the eunuch did not see him any longer (οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν οὐκέτι), for he proceeded on his way (ἐπορεύετο... τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ) rejoicing' (8:39).¹¹⁵¹ Philip 'is found' (εὐρέθη) in Azotus and propagates good news 'passing through' (διερχόμενος) the region (8:40).¹¹⁵² *Reisenotizen* (πορεύομαι + ὁδός: 8:26-27, 36, 39; + ὁδηγέω: 8:31; διέρχομαι: 8:40) connect this story to the journeying of Jesus (including my focal episodes)¹¹⁵³ and of other disciples.¹¹⁵⁴ Philip could have departed on foot, but the Spirit's translocative action is superfluously elusive, similar to Jesus' Emmaus disappearance also concluding a road journey.

Philip's departure is a pre-mortem divine assumption and terrestrial relocation. Commentators link it to departures of Elijah (1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:12, 16-18) and Ezekiel (Ezek 3:14-15; 8:3; 11:1, 24).¹¹⁵⁵ Brodie takes both Philip accounts (Acts 8:9-40) as imitating the Elisha-Naaman story (2 Kgs 5),¹¹⁵⁶ but a convincing departure parallel is lacking. Elijah/Elisha allusions link the Philip-eunuch story to the Nazareth episode evoking these figures with respect to the Gentile mission (Luke 4:25-27; cf. πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, 24:47) commencing with Philip (Acts 8), Peter (Acts 10-

¹¹⁴⁹ See Kurz 1993, 147-155 (climaxing in 28:26-28 quoting Isa 6:9-10).

¹¹⁵⁰ Although 8:37 describing the eunuch's belief is a scribal interpolation (with variation: E 323 945 1739 2818 it vg^{cl} sy^{h**} [NA²⁸, 406; Metzger 1994, 315-16]), τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ demonstrates early linkage to divine sonship.

¹¹⁵¹ Πνεῦμα κυρίου is likely original, and the doubly anarthrous form is common (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16; cf. Luke 4:18), but πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐνοῦχον, ἄγγελος δέ (A^c 323 945 1739 2818 p w sy^{h**} mae [NA²⁸, 406]) is explained by attempts to reconcile interchange between ἄγγελος κυρίου and [τὸ] πνεῦμα [κυρίου] and to include the Spirit at baptism (Bruce 1951, 195; 1988, 178; also Metzger 1994, 316).

¹¹⁵² Direction (8:26) and removal (8:39-40) by divine figures form an *inclusio* (see Mínguez 1976 [detailed chiasmus]; O'Toole's 1983b, 25-34 [slight critiques]).

¹¹⁵³ See Baban (2006, 207-213, cf. 36-37, 114-15, 207-271) on these and other journeying correspondences, including *Reisenotizen* connecting the Emmaus, Damascus, and Gaza roads episodes as well as my other focal episodes, among others.

¹¹⁵⁴ Filson 1970; Spencer 1992, 133. Taking κατὰ μεσημβρίαν (8:26) as temporal ('during midday'; van Unnik 1973; Gaventa 1986, 101-102) rather than directional ('southwards'; Haenchen 1971, 310) connects this with epiphanies to Peter (10:9) and Paul (22:6; 26:13) which also initiate the Gentile mission (Spencer 1992, 156-58).

¹¹⁵⁵ E.g.: Haenchen 1971, 313; Roloff 1981, 142; Johnson 1992, 157-58.

¹¹⁵⁶ Brodie 1986b.

11), and Paul (Acts 9; 13) through divine guidance.¹¹⁵⁷ Researchers offer various other departure parallels:

- Habakkuk by an angel of the Lord to Babylon (Bel 36);
- Jacob from Beersheba to Haran (targumim [Frg. Tg.; Tg. Neof.; Tg. Neof. mg.; Tg. Ps.-J.] Gen 28:10);
- Paris/Alexander by Aphrodite (Hom., *Il.* 3.380-83);
- Hector and Agenor by Apollo (Hom., *Il.* 20.443; 21.597);
- Ganymede by Zeus/the gods (Hom., *Il.* 20.233-35; *H.H. Aph.* 5.202-208; Pindar, *Ol.* 1.40; Diod. Sic. 4.75.5; Lucian, *Dial. d.* 4.1; 5.1-2);
- Cleitus by Dawn (Hom., *Od.* 15.250; cf. *H.H. Aph.* 5.218-27 [Tithonus]);
- Aeneas by Aphrodite (Dio Chrysostom, *Troj.* 90; Tryphiodorus, *Ilios* 651-53 [and Anchises]; cf. Hom., *Il.* 5.305-319);
- Hermes' ascent to Olympus (Hom., *Il.* 24.692-97);
- Romulus by Mars (Dion. Hal., *Ant. rom.* 2.56.2; Plutarch, *Rom.* 27.8);
- Apollonius from Domitian's court (Philost., *Vit. Apoll.* 8.10);
- And Jesus by the Holy Spirit to Mount Tabor (Gos. Heb. in Origen, *Hom. Jer.* 15.4 and Jerome, *Comm. Mich.* 7.6).¹¹⁵⁸

Some of these are relevant, but Jesus' relocation to Mount Tabor is undoubtedly dependent on the Philip-eunuch story, Jacob finds himself in Haran since the earth shrinks, Hermes reflexively ascends, and Apollonius reflexively teleports. Strelan interprets Philip's passive ascension, similar to Jesus (Acts 1:9) and Raphael (Tob 12:20-21), but mostly parallel to Elijah and Ezekiel due to the Spirit's agency.¹¹⁵⁹ Yet, Philip's instant, terrestrial, non-heavenbound relocation is more comparable to earthly transportations (e.g., Paris/Alexander, Hector, Aeneas, and Anchises) than to heavenly raptures (e.g., Ezekiel [possibly non-physical]; permanent: Jesus [gradual], Elijah, Ganymede, Cleitus, Tithonus, or Romulus) or returns (e.g., Raphael).

¹¹⁵⁷ Spencer 1992, 140-45. Jesus is sent εὐαγγελίσασθαι (Luke 4:18; cf. 4:43; 7:22; 8:1; 16:16; 20:1), but departs διελθὼν at Nazareth (4:30). His disciples pass through territories proclaiming good news (διέρχομαι + εὐαγγελίζω: 9:6; Acts 8:4, 40; cf. 5:42; 8:12, 25, 35; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18).

¹¹⁵⁸ Among others, with variation: Conzelmann 1972, 64; Strelan 2004, 88; Talbert 2005, 80; Pervo 2009, 226-27 n. 81; MacDonald 2015a, 116-17; 2019, 116-21 (Hermes' ascent). The Iliadic accounts have ἐξαρπάζω.

¹¹⁵⁹ Strelan 2004, 85-89.

The detail οὐκ εἶδεν αὐτὸν οὐκέτι (Acts 8:39) implies Philip’s ‘disappearance’ from the eunuch’s perspective and presence,¹¹⁶⁰ but not as closely resembling Jesus’ Emmaus disappearance as some researchers suppose.¹¹⁶¹ Weaver suggests that “[quasi-]miraculous” disappearances or relocations of Jesus (Luke 4:30; ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη εἰς ἔρημον τόπον, 4:42), Peter (ἐξελθὼν ἐπορεύθη εἰς ἕτερον τόπον, Acts 12:17), and Philip are similar, conforming to cross-cultural epiphanic conclusions.¹¹⁶² However, interpreting Jesus’ Nazareth escape as a disappearance or passive relocation is problematic (Chapter 5), and ἐξέρχομαι + πορεύομαι in proximity frequently conveys natural withdrawals (Gen 12:15; Jdg 19:27; 1 Sam 23:13; Luke 13:31; 22:39; Acts 16:36; 21:1, 5). Philip’s relocation is not invisibility, metamorphosis, disguising, flying, levitating, or teleportation.¹¹⁶³ Neither is he ‘seized’ by forceful pneumatic influence and direction.¹¹⁶⁴ Stählin observes that Philip’s seizure is unique among NT *Entrückungen* (Rev 12:5; 1 Thess 4:17; 2 Cor 12:2, 4; cf. Rev 17:3; 21:10), including Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1:2-9) and the devil leading Jesus (Matt 4:5-8).¹¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Luke’s own account of the devil ‘leading’ and ‘standing’ Jesus on the temple is similar (Luke 4:9), implying the devil’s ability (like the Spirit’s) to transport others.¹¹⁶⁶ Jesus is passive here, but after the devil departs he alone supernaturally returns to Galilee (4:13-14; §5.1.2). Longenecker likens Philip’s relocation (under “Divine Deliverance”) to Jesus’ Nazareth escape, comparatively seeing the latter as “...relatively simple and uncomplicated...”¹¹⁶⁷ However, Philip does not require deliverance from danger, has no intention of elusiveness, and is made elusive by divine (pneumatic) causality. Jesus is in danger, intentionally elusive, and reflexively escapes (pneumatically empowered), remaining present to pass through the Nazarenes and proceed to Capernaum (§5.1.2), not seized by any implied agent. This underscores Jesus’

¹¹⁶⁰ Barrett 1994/1998, 1:434.

¹¹⁶¹ Pace Nolland 1989–1993, 3:1206; Edwards 2015, 724; with Wanke 1973, 146, n. 315.

¹¹⁶² Weaver 2004, 177-78 n. 80.

¹¹⁶³ Keener 2012–2015, 2:1593-94.

¹¹⁶⁴ Contra Peterson 2009, 297.

¹¹⁶⁵ Stählin 1962, 130.

¹¹⁶⁶ C.F. Evans (1990, 259) appreciates imagined relocation (cf. Ezek 8:3).

¹¹⁶⁷ Longenecker 2012, 59-60 [60].

superiority and self-elusive journeying, especially his reflexive supernatural departures at Nazareth and on the Emmaus road.

Scholars detect parallels between the Nazareth and Philip-eunuch pericopae,¹¹⁶⁸ between the Emmaus and Philip-eunuch pericopae,¹¹⁶⁹ and (to a lesser extent) between the Nazareth and Emmaus pericopae,¹¹⁷⁰ but often stress resemblances over variances.¹¹⁷¹ Moreover, critics miss shared elements between all three (and their co-texts),¹¹⁷² including the childhood story: an enigmatic journeyer/visitor joins others' company,¹¹⁷³ assumes a pedagogic/didactic role, and displays knowledge or scriptural prowess; the Spirit's presence;¹¹⁷⁴ emphasis on Jesus' inscrutable identity/christological revelation; elusive separation/withdrawal; and responses of amazement. As we have seen, these accounts (and to a lesser extent the Damascus road encounter) also feature the journey and misunderstanding motifs and passion allusions, proleptic in the childhood and Nazareth episodes then analeptic in the Emmaus road and Philip-eunuch stories. Nevertheless, the reader observing such correspondences also notes contrasts.

¹¹⁶⁸ E.g.: Weiser 1981/1985, 1:210-13; Spencer 1992, 140-41; Clark 2001, 282; Longenecker 2012, 59-60; Dinkler 2017c, 419-22; O'Toole (1983b, 31-32) adds Acts 13:13-43 (Jesus fulfils OT promises; Isaianic references; proclaimer seated before speaking; and Jewish resistance versus Gentile receptiveness), but excludes departures. The Philip-eunuch story exemplifies inclusion of Gentiles, the marginalised, and physically disabled (Luke 13:11; 19:1-10; see Parsons 2008, 123-24), emphasised at Nazareth (4:18, 26-27).

¹¹⁶⁹ E.g.: Dupont 1953, 361-64; Orlett 1959; Grassi 1964; Wanke 1973, 119-22, *passim*; Gibbs 1975; Dillon 1978, 104-155; Lindijer (1978) identifies similar terminology (καὶ ἰδοῦ; ὁδός; πορεύομαι; ἄρξαμενος ἀπό; περι) and extensive correspondences, including with the Damascus road encounter (followed by Chauvet 1994, 161-66); Weiser 1981/1985, 1:210-13; Charpentier 1982; O'Toole 1983b, 31-32; Robinson 1984, 483-85 (recognition motif; cf. Acts 12:6-17); Spencer 1992, 141-45; Clark 2001, 282-83; Strelan 2004, 85-89; Matthews 2002, 83-86; Pervo 2009, 219-20; Parsons 2014, 104-107.

¹¹⁷⁰ Spencer (2008, 46-47) connects previews/reviews.

¹¹⁷¹ Particularly comparing Jesus' Emmaus disappearance to Philip's departure: Betz 1961, 168-69; Bouwman 1968, 14; Spencer 1992, 141-45, 155; Baban 2006, 127. Jervell (1998, 274) acknowledges Philip's non-heavenbound passive translocation, but advocates Elijah and Ezekiel parallels.

¹¹⁷² Although Smith (1994, 62-63) suggests recognition-scenes (anti-recognition at Nazareth) and other correspondences between the Philip-eunuch story and the Emmaus or Nazareth pericopae, some parallels are not between all three, Jesus is recognised rather than Philip, and Smith omits departures.

¹¹⁷³ Although travelling with family, Jesus joins teachers as a precondition to be discovered among them (Luke 2:46)

¹¹⁷⁴ Implied during childhood (cf. Luke 1:35; 2:49) and resurrection appearances (cf. Acts 1:2).

Intricate parallels and patterns invite reader comparison, highlighting meticulous depictions of actional roles, namely Jesus' reflexive/active elusiveness and Philip's passivity. The child Jesus deliberately remains in Jerusalem, then wilfully submits to his parents (Luke 2:41-52). The Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness (4:1-2), but he is pneumatically empowered and active in Galilee (4:14-15) and at Nazareth from where he reflexively departs (4:16-30). Jesus approaches the Emmaus disciples with self-initiative (24:15), engages them with a motive (24:17-27), controls his (un)recognisability (24:16, 31a), and reflexively departs (24:31b). Comparatively, Philip performs exorcisms and healings in Samaria (Acts 8:5-8), but remains passive in the eunuch episode,¹¹⁷⁵ being supernaturally guided,¹¹⁷⁶ invited by the eunuch,¹¹⁷⁷ and relocated by divine agency, irrespective of agreed participation.¹¹⁷⁸ Even identity-pondering in the Philip-eunuch story pertains to Jesus. The reader's comparison of the Philip-eunuch story (including extratextual allusions) with my focal episodes further characterises the self-elusive Jesus as a superior, supramundane figure.

8.2. Comparing Luke's Elusive Jesus with Elusive Angels in Luke-Acts

Like other NT authors, Luke inherits angelological traditions¹¹⁷⁹ (Luke 1:11-38; 2:9-21; 4:10; 9:26; 12:8-9; 15:10; 16:22; 20:36; 22:43; 24:23; Acts 5:19; 6:15; 7:30, 35, 38, 53; 8:26; 10:3, 7, 22; 11:13; 12:7-23; 23:8-9; 27:23), thus describing superior and identifiable angels (e.g., Gabriel) and aware of OT oscillations between [ὁ] ἄγγελος κυρίου/θεοῦ and Yahweh.¹¹⁸⁰ Elusiveness of Lukan angels is consistent with ancient Jewish traditions.¹¹⁸¹ Comparing angelic luminosity, disappearances, and supernatural control with Jesus' elusiveness contributes to his character and a Lukan theme.

¹¹⁷⁵ Haenchen 1971, 316; Gaventa 1986, 102-105; Spencer 1992, 133-34, 154-58.

¹¹⁷⁶ Grassi 1964, 464 (contrasting Jesus' initiative on the Emmaus road).

¹¹⁷⁷ The hospitality motif is unpronounced (with Spencer 1992, 142; *pace* Grassi 1964).

¹¹⁷⁸ With Strelan 2004, 89; *pace* Spencer 1992, 155.

¹¹⁷⁹ See Hannah 1999, 122-27.

¹¹⁸⁰ See n. 1106.

¹¹⁸¹ See Chapter 3; cf. Fletcher-Louis 1997; de Long 2017 (apocalyptic function).

8.2.1. Angelophanies and Heavenly Epiphanies

There is a noticeable distinction between actional role or initiative of Christophanies and other epiphanies. God sends angels, either explicitly stated by the narrator (Luke 1:26), an angel itself (1:19), another character (Acts 12:11), or implied (Luke 2:9-13; 24:4; Acts 1:10; 10:3, 30; 27:23-26). God sends Jesus in terms of life, mission, and messiahship (Luke 4:18, 26 [implied], 43; 9:48; 10:16; 20:13 [implied]; Acts 3:18-21), but Christophanies otherwise occur by Jesus' self-initiative,¹¹⁸² and Jesus promises to preserve Paul rather than attributing aid to God. In fact, the reader may identify Jesus as [ὁ] κύριος who sends angels (e.g., 12:11). Compared with angels, Jesus shows more epiphanic initiative and reflexivity/activity, not only suggesting degrees of supramundane actional roles and hierarchy, but indicating his superior theomorphism.

Lukan angelophanies and other visible epiphanies are not always luminous. Zechariah witnesses a non-luminous angelophany in the temple: 'there appeared (ὤφθη) to him an angel of the Lord standing (ἄγγελος κυρίου ἑστώς) at the right of the altar of incense' (Luke 1:11).¹¹⁸³ The angel identifies as Gabriel who 'was sent' (ἀπεστάλην, 1:19)¹¹⁸⁴ to announce John's birth (1:12-20). Zechariah sees (ιδών, 1:12) Gabriel and is overcome with fear, but unimpaired, at least until muted for disbelief (1:20). Later, Gabriel is 'sent by God' (ἀπεστάλη... ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, 1:26) to Nazareth and perplexes Mary with his greeting (1:27-38), though she is unstartled, evincing a disguised visitation (§§2.1.1; 3.1.1). When Jesus prays alone on the Mount of Olives, a scribal interpolation (22:43-44)¹¹⁸⁵ adds that an angel appears (ὤφθη) from heaven and strengthens him. Whilst Paul is at Troas, an ἀνὴρ of Macedonia appears in a vision, 'standing' (ἑστώς) and pleading for help (Acts 16:9).¹¹⁸⁶ Luke uses ἀνὴρ for

¹¹⁸² See Chapter 7.

¹¹⁸³ On ὤφθη connoting epiphanies (Luke 22:43; 24:34; Acts 7:2, 30; 13:31; 16:9) see Strelan 2004, 183.

¹¹⁸⁴ Whether labelled a 'divine passive' (Fitzmyer 1970/1985, 1:328), God is undoubtedly the implied sender.

¹¹⁸⁵ With variation: κ*^{2b} D K L Q Γ Δ Θ Ψ J¹ ℳ lat sy^{c.p.h**} bo^{pt}; omitted: ℞⁷⁵ κ^{2a} A B N T W 579 sy^s sa bo^{pt} (NA²⁸, 278); see Ehrman and Plunkett 1983; Metzger 1994, 151. Tuckett (2002b) suggests originality due to parallels with Paul (Acts 21:13; 27:23-24); cf. Clivaz 2005.

¹¹⁸⁶ Stählin 1962, 214 (divine messenger); Spencer 2004, 172 (neither an angel nor divine epiphany). Miller (2007, 94-98) determines that ἀνὴρ here invites interpretation, given humans in dream-visions (Acts 9:12; cf. 2 Macc 15:11-16) unlike divine agents with other phenomena (Luke 1; Acts 10:3, 30; Luke 24:4-7 and Acts 1:10 considering Luke 24:22-23).

angels (Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10), but also for epiphanic Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:30, 32),¹¹⁸⁷ so attempts to identify the figure beyond a constituent of the divinely induced vision¹¹⁸⁸ are fruitless.¹¹⁸⁹ When Paul faces a threatening storm whilst sailing (Acts 27:21-26), he reassures passengers that ‘an angel of God’ (τοῦ θεοῦ... ἄγγελος) visibly ‘stood by’ (παρέστη) to confirm that God will preserve them, though the ship must run aground (27:23).¹¹⁹⁰ Roloff suggests that a Christophany would require explanation to non-Jewish shipmates, so a divine ‘messenger’ appears.¹¹⁹¹ Aside from (non-)luminosity, it is worth mentioning that supramundane characters partially manifest, such as an unseen angel speaking to Philip (8:26), a voice to Peter (10:13; 11:7), or even the Spirit communicating epiphanically or internally (8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2, 4; cf. 23:9),¹¹⁹² similar to Jesus’ (im)perceptibility on the Damascus road (Chapter 7). Ultimately, the reader observes that heavenly figures, like Jesus, manifest non-luminously and without causing inhibition.

Luke’s reader also notes uninhibiting luminous angelophanies, apart from induced fear, congruous with ancient Mediterranean luminous epiphanies (§§2.1.2; 3.1.2). An ἄγγελος κυρίου appears (ἐπέστη) to shepherds, ‘and the glory of the Lord shone around (δόξα κυρίου περιέλαμψεν) them’ (Luke 2:9-12). They are exceedingly fearful (2:9), but watch and listen when ‘suddenly there was (ἐξαίφνης ἐγένετο) with the angel a multitude of a host of heaven praising God...’ (2:13). Luminosity is from δόξα κυρίου, not the angel or host, and is practical during τῆς νυκτός (2:8-9). Disciples observe Moses and Elijah appear with δόξα at Jesus’ transfiguration (9:30-32).¹¹⁹³ Women at Jesus’ tomb bow from fear when ‘two men’ (angels) appear (ἐπέστησαν) ‘in gleaming clothing’ (ἐν ἐσθῆτι ἀστραπούση, 24:4).¹¹⁹⁴

¹¹⁸⁷ Qumran messianism included anticipated eschatological returns of Moses and Elijah as prophet and priestly Messiah, respectively, possibly depicted in Rev 11:1-13 (Poirier 2003a; 2004).

¹¹⁸⁸ Strelan (2004, 183) emphasises an objective and external appearance.

¹¹⁸⁹ Pace Johnson 1992, 286 (Luke or his companion given co-textual ‘we-passages’).

¹¹⁹⁰ Besides Jesus ensuring Paul’s safety, Paul testifies about God’s aid (26:22).

¹¹⁹¹ Roloff 1981, 363.

¹¹⁹² Ambiguous cases: 15:28; 16:6-7; 19:21; 20:22-23.

¹¹⁹³ Cf Rev 18:1.

¹¹⁹⁴ Cf. Mark 16:5; Matt 28:3; John 20:12.

In Acts, whilst the disciples watch Jesus ascend ‘two men’ again stand by (παρειστήκεισαν) ‘in white clothing’ (ἐν ἐσθήσεσιν λευκαῖς, 1:10),¹¹⁹⁵ symbolising radiance (cf. Luke 9:29; 2 Macc 11:8). People looking at Stephen see ‘his face like a face of an angel’ (τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ πρόσωπον ἀγγέλου, Acts 6:15), implying a shining countenance congruent with angelic luminosity.¹¹⁹⁶ Visibility is emphasised with Cornelius’ vision (ὄραματι) as he ‘clearly saw’ (εἶδεν... φανερωῶς...) God’s angel approaching (εἰσελθόντα πρὸς αὐτόν, 10:3). Cornelius stares (ὁ δὲ ἀτενίσας αὐτῷ) in trepidation, respectfully addressing him as κύριε (10:4-6; cf. 10:22; 11:13),¹¹⁹⁷ later relaying, ‘a man stood before me in bright clothing’ (ἄνθρωπος ἕστη ἐνώπιόν μου ἐν ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾷ, 10:30; cf. 10:31-33). Light also emanates from the clothing or appearance of the angel liberating Peter (φῶς ἔλαμψεν ἐν τῷ οἰκίματι, 12:7). Textual variants imply an angelophany only to Peter (τῷ Πέτρῳ) or indicate luminosity from the angel (αὐτοῦ), explaining the light or why guards are undisturbed,¹¹⁹⁸ though the light pragmatically brightens the dim atmosphere (cf. Luke 2:8).¹¹⁹⁹

The reader, considering angelophanies and Christophanies in Luke-Acts (Chapter 7), observes that epiphanic glory or luminosity is uninhibiting, even as witnesses gaze, with the exception of the Damascus road Christophany blinding only Paul, enhancing Jesus’ elusive character.

8.2.2. Angelic Departures

Lukan angels appear and reflexively disappear consonant with ancient Mediterranean supramundane figures (§§2.1.3; 3.1.3; 6.2.3). We recall Luke’s propensity to record concluding departures (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33; 24:31; Acts 10:7; 12:10).¹²⁰⁰ Gabriel, who normally stands in God’s presence (Luke 1:19), disappears to heaven concluding angelophanies (καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ’ αὐτῆς ὁ ἄγγελος, 1:38;

¹¹⁹⁵ These are not Moses and Elijah (named at the transfiguration) who also appear at the tomb (*pace* Mánek 1957, 11-12; Johnson 1992, 27).

¹¹⁹⁶ See Dunn 1996, 88; Strelan 2004, 129.

¹¹⁹⁷ Contra Dunn (1996, 131), τοῦ κυρίου (10:33) is no angel, but τοῦ θεοῦ in the same verse or (more likely) the unidentified speaker (10:13-14).

¹¹⁹⁸ Pervo 2009, 304 n. 37; NA²⁸, 419: τῷ Πέτρῳ (Ɑ¹²⁷vid D p it sy^{(p).h**} sa cop^{mac}); αὐτοῦ (Ɑ¹²⁷ sy^{hmg} g p r Lcf).

¹¹⁹⁹ On dim cells see Rapske 1994, 199-202.

¹²⁰⁰ Lohfink 1971, 150, cf. 170; §6.1.2.

ἀπῆλθον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν οἱ ἄγγελοι, 2:15). Even the devil disappears from Jesus (ἀπέστη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, 4:13). Epiphanic Moses and Elijah prepare to depart from Jesus (διαχωρίζεσθαι... ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, 9:33), then disappear and ‘Jesus was found alone’ (εὐρέθη Ἰησοῦς μόνος, 9:36). The reader deciphers an angelic *aphaneia* when Cornelius later describes his vision in epiphanic terms (ἀπῆλθεν, Acts 10:7; ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ἔστη, 10:30). The angel liberating Peter disappears (εὐθέως ἀπέστη ὁ ἄγγελος ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, 12:10), conveyed by ἀφίστημι antithetical to ἐφίστημι (12:7).¹²⁰¹ The reader thus infers angelic vanishings or vanishing-ascensions from departure terminology (ἀπέρχομαι; διαχωρίζω; ἀφίστημι). This also supports the reader’s construal of Jesus’ reflexive, teleportative return after the devil stands him (ἔστησεν) on the temple (Luke 4:9, 13-14; §5.1.2). Yet, Luke most explicitly describes Jesus’ Emmaus disappearance as a sudden vanishing with ἄφαντος + γίνομαι and ἀπ’ αὐτῶν (Luke 24:31b; §6.2.3). Although other Christophanies are without explicit conclusions, Luke’s proclivity for narrating disappearances affords comparative material for the reader to build Jesus’ supramundane elusive character. Furthermore, these contribute to the elusiveness theme.

8.2.3. Angelic Supernatural Control

God and angels exercise [occasionally punitive] supernatural control in Luke-Acts. Gabriel declares that Zechariah ‘will be silent and not able to speak’ (ἔση σιωπῶν καὶ μὴ δυνάμενος λαλῆσαι) due to incredulity (Luke 1:20). Inferably, God executes Gabriel’s proclamation (cf. 1:22)¹²⁰² since Zechariah’s mouth and tongue are opened (ἀνεώχθη) in Gabriel’s absence (1:64). We saw that angels manipulate doors (Acts 5:19, 23; 12:10), loosen restraints (12:6-7), and guide incarcerated disciples (5:19; 12:7-10), rendering themselves and escapees (im)perceptible or incapacitating guards. An ἄγγελος κυρίου punitively smites (ἐπάταξεν) Herod¹²⁰³ who becomes consumed by worms (γενόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος) for welcoming praise as a god (Acts 12:23).¹²⁰⁴ The participial construction describes the tyrant’s cause of death

¹²⁰¹ Pesch 1986, 1:365 n. 28.

¹²⁰² Cf. McCabe 2011, 223 (speech act); similarly, Thomas 2010, 188-89.

¹²⁰³ Allen 1997, 130; Dicken 2014, 149-53.

¹²⁰⁴ Cf. Jdt 16:17; 2 Macc 9:5-10; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.168-79; *J.W.* 1:656; Hdt. 4.205; Paus. 9.7.2-3; Pliny, *Nat.* 7.172; Lucian, *Alex.* 59 (Conzelmann 1972, 80; Johnson 1992, 216).

resulting from angelic implantation.¹²⁰⁵ The ἄγγελος κυρίου, whose unindicated appearance suggests invisibility, executes punishment.¹²⁰⁶ Lukan depictions accord with angels rescuing (Gen 19; 1 Kgs 19:5-7; Ps 91:11; Dan 3:25-28; 12:1; cf. Isa 63:9),¹²⁰⁷ manipulating perception (Gen 19:11; LAB 27.10; 3 Macc 5:19; §3.1.8), and smiting mortals dead (Exod 12:23; 2 Kgs 19:35//Isa 37:36; Ps 35:6; 2 Sam 24:16-18//1 Chron 21:12-18, 30; 2 Chron 32:21; Ezek 9:3-6). Comparatively, the reader infers Jesus' [occasionally punitive] supernatural control (§§6.1.1; 6.2.2; 7.2.2), including at Nazareth where reading angelic deliverance is problematised (§§5.1; 5.2.6) by unambiguous articulations of angelic supernatural control and deliverance elsewhere (Acts 5:17-20; 12:1-11). Jesus' power of control is ultimately theomorphic.

8.3. Synthesis and Observations

Concentrating on other elusive characters compared with Jesus highlights his reflexivity/activity and exceptional theomorphism. These other instances also contribute to a coherent and comprehensive elusiveness theme. Jesus' disciples are elusive by divine causality, including by his activity. They either elude death or are martyred according to divine sovereignty. Jesus, who was pneumatically empowered and characterised as Wisdom, confers upon his disciples the Spirit and irrefutable wisdom. Thus, pneumatically empowered disciples mediate or petition divine control by pronouncing punitive consequences on dissidents executed by God. Yet, Jesus successfully escapes his enemies' hands until he wilfully submits whereas his disciples, whose hands mediate wonders, are seized by antagonists' hands and incarcerated, their fettered hands rendered impotent, unable to escape and requiring divine deliverance. Irony is unequivocal and non-accidental. Paul even survives deadly snakebite on his hand at Malta, leading to his mistaken divine identity, though his life is actually divinely preserved.

Longenecker determines divine causality at Nazareth (rescuing Jesus) and in the incarceration deliverances, the Malta episode, and the Philip-eunuch story.¹²⁰⁸ However, Jesus is reflexively elusive and makes his disciples elusive, equipping and

¹²⁰⁵ The participle likely functions as attendant circumstance (Culy and Parsons 2003, 242).

¹²⁰⁶ Also Marshall 1980, 212 (invisibility). Angels speak invisibly (8:26; 23:9).

¹²⁰⁷ See Mach 1992, 62.

¹²⁰⁸ Longenecker 2012, 56-60.

preserving them coordinately with divine causality. He displays sovereignty over his circumstances and fate, aware of God's plan and resolutely accomplishing it through his elusiveness. His statement that he will equip his disciples to be irrefutable (Luke 21:15), sending them the Spirit (12:11-12), implies his awareness of post-mortem existence and supernatural activity.¹²⁰⁹ Considering the prevalence of human passivity vis-à-vis divine causality in Jesus-disciple parallels, the reader observes the prominence of Jesus' reflexive/active elusiveness underscoring his superiority.

The childhood, Nazareth, Emmaus road, and Philip-eunuch accounts (including the Damascus road encounter to a lesser extent) reflect shared elements and a pattern, including the journey and misunderstanding motifs and passion allusions. These parallels facilitate the reader's comparison of Jesus and Philip. Philip is passively initiated, directed, and relocated by divine agency. His departure evokes comparison with Jesus' Emmaus disappearance, highlighting variances: Jesus reflexively and suddenly vanishes concluding an immortal(ised) epiphany whereas Philip is passively assumed and terrestrially relocated like divinely raptured mortals. Jesus' superfluous elusiveness, such as allowing himself to be led to a precipice before escaping at Nazareth and travelling unrecognised with the Emmaus disciples then (dis)appearing anticipates divinely caused superfluous elusiveness, such as Paul's survivals of deadly inflictions, Philip's rapturous translocation, and incarceration deliverances. Such extravagance accentuates the elusiveness theme.

God sends angels in Luke-Acts as messengers, aides, and punishers, in keeping with Jewish traditions and similar to Graeco-Roman epiphanies.¹²¹⁰ The reader observes correlates with only minor differences between the elusiveness of Jesus and angels. Angels display uninhibiting luminosity (Luke 2:9-13; 9:30-31 [Moses and Elijah]; 24:4; Acts 1:10; 10:30; 12:7) as does Jesus at his transfiguration and to Stephen, though his radiance blinds only Paul. Angels appear in closed rooms (Acts 5:19; 12:7) as does Jesus (Luke 24:36). Angelophanies conclude with heavenbound disappearances (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33 [Moses and Elijah]; Acts 10:7; 12:10) and Jesus explicitly disappears concluding resurrection appearances, though not sent by God. Finally, angels exercise [occasionally punitive] supernatural control (Luke 1:19-22; Acts 5:17-20; 12:1-11, 23), similar to plausible readings of Jesus'

¹²⁰⁹ Similarly, Buckwalter 1996, 191.

¹²¹⁰ Cf. Acts 12:15; Heb 1:14.

activity in my focal episodes. Although Jewish literature portrays humans as angelomorphic/angelised, including with luminosity,¹²¹¹ they are not elusive in these ways.¹²¹²

Any Lukan *Geheimnis* is subsumable under a coherent, comprehensive, and encompassing elusiveness theme accounting for recurrent mystery/secretcy in Acts, involving several characters and events, and pertaining to matters beyond messiahship or suffering. This theme creates an enthralling story, brimming with intriguing figures and phenomena, maintaining reader engagement. Thematic aspects of Jesus' elusive activity anticipating yet also contrasting with his disciples' elusiveness further compel the reader to ponder Christology.

The reader's comparative assessments reveal and support an active-present Christology. The reader contemplates Jesus' guidance and preservation of favoured mortals whom he makes elusive, activity normally predicated of gods, particularly of Yahweh with whom he shares the appellation [ὁ] κύριος and other divine prerogatives, some of which are also shared with angels (e.g., physical transience, [dis]appearance, supernatural control, and the punitive theophanic trope when Yahweh employs deputised angelic proxies).¹²¹³ Still, Jesus' elusiveness also differs from angels, indicating his extraordinarily intimate divine sonship, signifying God's visitation beyond that of angelophanies or angelic virtual theoxenies, representing divine hiddenness in response to misconduct, and being characterised as Wisdom. Jesus' elusiveness beyond angelomorphism indicates his exceptionally theomorphic identity and proximity to Yahweh.

¹²¹¹ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 109-215; cf. 1996; 2000; 2002.

¹²¹² On Jesus' superiority to angels see also Dunn 1980, 149-59.

¹²¹³ Cf. Jesus' judicial authority conferred on enthroned disciples (Luke 22:30).

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION: SIGNIFICANCE OF ELUSIVENESS FOR LUKAN COMPOSITION AND
CHRISTOLOGY

9.1. Narrative Matters: Elusiveness and Lukan Composition

In this thesis I employed an ancient reader guided by extratextual and intratextual data to ascertain a reader-oriented portrait of the elusive Jesus which also primarily contributes to a coherent and comprehensive elusiveness theme in Luke and extending into Acts. This involved reconstructing an ancient Mediterranean extratextual repertoire of literary elusiveness phenomena (Chapters 2-3). I concentrated on indirect characterisation in focal paradigmatic episodes illustrating stages of Jesus' life and afterlife, namely his childhood (Chapter 4), programmatic Nazareth visitation (Chapter 5), Emmaus road resurrection appearance (Chapter 6), and ascended-exalted activity on the Damascus road (Chapter 7). After assessing scholarly explanations and textual delimitations of interpretive options for critics and the reader, I offered extratextual-informed readings of these passages. Intratextual correspondences advanced the reader's portraiture of the elusive Jesus and recognition of an elusiveness theme (Chapter 8).¹²¹⁴ In this concluding chapter I summarise and synthesise significant observations of the foregoing analyses to elucidate some implications for Lukan composition and to reflect on contributions to Lukan Christology.

9.1.1. Building the Portrait of the Elusive Jesus and Recognising the Theme of Elusiveness

My attention to narrative specificities, norms, and directives revealed how the texts of Luke and Acts conduce or problematise readings of elusiveness phenomena, including invoked extratextual and intratextual analogues. My investigation of elusiveness contributed an ancient Mediterranean extratextual repertoire cataloguing some new categories and additional analogues for reading Luke-Acts. It also offered several novel readings or reinforced underrepresented readings. In terms of novel readings, we saw how the child Jesus resembles elusive Wisdom (foreshadowing

¹²¹⁴ Also Chapters 4-7, *passim*.

withdrawals and isolations) or a superhuman and independent youth surpassing Telemachus when read alongside the *Telemacheia*. I identified the Nazareth pericope as a theoxenic episode with Jesus' elusiveness reminiscent of divine hiddenness and Wisdom, concluding with a punitive theophanic traversal trope prefiguring hostility evasions. For the Damascus road encounter, I deliberated Jesus' supernatural control of his Christophanic luminosity blinding Paul but not others. In terms of underrepresented readings, the Nazareth pericope's description of Jesus' evasion supports invisibility/impalpability and supernatural control. My assessment of the Emmaus road episode reinforced a theoxenic trope with Jesus appearing privately as an unrecognised divine visitor, though defamiliarised with Jesus' cognitive-perceptual control then *aphaneia* typical of both immortal and immortalised epiphanic conclusions. Finally, disparate experiences on the Damascus road depict Jesus as exercising both selective and partial (im)perceptibility for private revelation to Paul.

We also observed Jesus' cryptic speech/speaking in my focal episodes,¹²¹⁵ requiring the narrative audience and reader to draw inferences about his identity and roles: his rhetorical reply to his mother (Luke 2:49, 50, 51b); his self-application of prophetic passages (4:21-22), rejection predictions, and allusions to Gentile inclusion (4:23-27); his questions feigning ignorance to the Emmaus disciples followed by his elucidation whilst their perception is restrained (24:17-19, 25-27; cf. 24:16, 31a); and his corporate identification with persecuted disciples (Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-15) and limited instructions (9:6; 22:10; cf. 26:16-18). Paradoxically, Jesus gives revelation in allusive, concealed, or other cryptic ways, perhaps resulting in cognitive errancies (i.e., misunderstanding, incomplete understanding, or incomprehension).

The reader recognises an elusiveness theme comprising the elusive Jesus and other elusive characters or events facilitated by intratextual correspondences.¹²¹⁶ We saw how Jesus' disciples are elusive by divine causality. Paul flees antagonists and survives an execution attempt and deadly snakebite, including by Jesus' preservation (§8.1.1). Angels and a theophany liberate disciples from incarcerations (§8.1.2). The apostles mediate or petition divine power or supernatural control (§8.1.3). The Spirit

¹²¹⁵ Among others (Luke 20:1-18; 22:67-71; 23:9) and besides parabolic discourse (see §1.1.2).

¹²¹⁶ Including Terrien's Luke-Acts examples (§1.1.1.i).

snatches away Philip after an angel of the Lord guides him, an episode sharing several correspondences with my focal episodes, including the journey motif and passion allusions (§8.1.4). Although angelic figures are reflexively/actively elusive by (dis)appearing and exercising supernatural control, they lack self-initiative and sovereignty which Jesus displays (§8.2). Comparatively, these augment the reader's portrait of an exceptionally supramundane, self-elusive Jesus.

Reisenotizen in my focal episodes mark the recurrent journey motif (and related divine visitation theme) which is proleptic in the childhood and Nazareth pericopae of Jesus' resolute journey to suffer in Jerusalem whilst analeptic of this in the Emmaus and Damascus roads pericopae.¹²¹⁷ Jesus reflexively evades hostility until submitting to his destined passion then intervenes in journeys on the Emmaus and Damascus roads. The disciples journey with the gospel without evading harm—some are martyred, others are delivered after beatings and incarcerations, and Paul survives deadly inflictions (by Jesus' aid). Philip journeys by divine direction and intervention. Journeying expresses missional indomitability, but forms a contrast between the self-elusive Jesus and his passively elusive disciples.

Unsurprisingly, given the journey motif affiliated with the *Leidensgeheimnis*, allusions to Jesus' necessary suffering recur in my focal episodes. Jesus' suffering proclaimed in the infancy narrative is represented by his childhood journey to Jerusalem where he sits among teachers in the temple as God's Son during Passover foreshadowing his adulthood journey to Jerusalem, teaching in the temple, and crucifixion as the Son of God during Passover. At Nazareth his messiahship and divine sonship are evoked, he predicts his mocked suffering, and he escapes execution prefiguring hostility evasions until his passion. Jesus' messiahship and passion permeate the Emmaus road episode where the disciples realise the necessity of messianic suffering and resurrection. Finally, Paul preaches Jesus as the Son of God, realising he is the resurrected Messiah after the Damascus road encounter. Nevertheless, elusiveness extends christologically and thematically beyond messianic suffering.

¹²¹⁷ On suffering specifically see Baban 2006, 48, 167, 176-80, 248, 250-56. Baban (2006, 175) sees Luke 1-2 as prefatory for divine visitation recurring in Jesus' Jerusalem journey and Emmaus road episode.

Jesus' elusiveness in my focal episodes represents his conduct more broadly, including but not limited to motifs associated with *Geheimnis*-theories, such as withdrawing/isolating, evading hostility, desiring privacy, causing incomprehension, and speaking cryptically or discontinuously. Jesus' elusiveness does not cease after the disciples' epistemological improvement of his necessary passion in Luke 24. Furthermore, intratextual correspondences link the elusiveness of Jesus and of others beyond matters of messiahship or suffering. Thus, we saw how *Geheimnis*-theories (occasionally engaging Acts for supporting content) are subsumable under a more encompassing, comprehensive, and coherent elusiveness theme comprising several literary conventions, characters, and events.

9.1.2. Recapitulating the Extent of Intertextuality

Given my methodological appeal to extratextual elusiveness, I considered intertextuality pertaining specifically to elusiveness phenomena in my focal episodes.¹²¹⁸ I have not discovered compelling evidence of specific intertextual sources bearing their marks. Luke's mimetic activity for representations of elusiveness reflects not so much contentual or stylistic mimesis as literary-conventional imitation, including composites of appropriated motifs and tropes as well as character imitation, ultimately constituent of a broader thematic mimesis.¹²¹⁹ Elusive characters and themes saturate ancient Mediterranean literature (Chapters 2-3). One need only to recall characterisations of Homeric gods, divinely aided mortals (e.g., Telemachus and Odysseus), the Euripidean Dionysus, or Yahweh and his supramundane subordinates. Jesus most resembles these famously elusive deities whilst his disciples resemble divinely aided mortals with Luke-Acts reflecting an elusiveness theme reminiscent of the celebrated texts featuring these figures—notably, Homer's *Odyssey*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, and antique Jewish scriptural literature.

Gods and mortals are characterised as elusive with multiple literary conventions forming an elusiveness theme in Homer's *Odyssey*. This involves

¹²¹⁸ I peripherally addressed intertextuality in other details of my focal episodes (e.g., Isaianic quotations or Elijah/Elisha references at Nazareth) or other passages (e.g., Ovidian-related tradition [*Metam.* 8.612-724] in Acts 14:8-20).

¹²¹⁹ On mimesis types see Baban 2006, 18-25, 73-118.

conventions beyond secrecy and recognition which MacDonald sees Mark imitating for the so-called ‘messianic secret’ (see §1.1.1.ii). Athene visits incognito, aids virtual theoxenies, becomes invisible, makes mortals undetectable, departs supernaturally, and exercises supernatural control. Telemachus departs without his mother’s knowledge and participates in virtual theoxenies by Athene’s aid. Odysseus also participates in virtual theoxenies and is cunning and evasive by divine assistance. Dionysus’ elusiveness permeates Euripides’ *Bacchae* with the god’s theoxeny, liberations of himself and bacchants, supernatural control, cryptic and avoidant dialogue, and disappearance. Jewish documents characterise figures as elusive—notably, Yahweh, Wisdom, and angels—with an elusiveness theme emergent especially when viewed as a literary corpus. Even Jesus’ prominent ancestors are evasive, deceptive, tricky, or otherwise subversive, often aided by their elusive God (e.g., Rebekah, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and David).¹²²⁰ Yahweh conducts theoxenies, hides himself (i.e., becomes inaccessible/silent), theophanically visits for benefit or detriment, and supernaturally controls mortals. Withdrawn or self-hidden Wisdom is sought and [not] found. Angelic figures (including angelomorphic theophanies) participate in theoxenies, appear (non-)luminously, disappear, become invisible, execute divine punishments, and supernaturally control mortals. These celebrated texts offered precedents for and inspired Lukan thematic elusiveness. Whenever Luke’s reader invokes a work or literary corpus after noting several apparent overlaps, they retrospectively/prospectively consider it for [modifying] readings.

Luke’s childhood story noticeably alludes to elusive Wisdom traditions (§3.1.6), particularly with a wisdom-understanding association, Jesus’ separation prefiguring withdrawals, Jesus depicted as a precocious child proximate to his Father in the temple, and the foregrounded seeking-finding motif (§4.2.2). A child precocity motif is also axiomatic, but scholars overlook how this episode recalls independent youth traditions, especially coming of age journeys and particularly the *Telemacheia* (§§2.1.6; 4.2.1). Tobit reflects a tapestry of intertextual relationships, including with the *Telemacheia* or at least a shared or underlying tradition of a journeying youth, probably on a coming of age journey, accompanied by a heavenly disguised visitor.

¹²²⁰ See n. 320; Esther, especially Greek Additions.

However, Tobit lacks the parental unawareness element crucial in the *Telemacheia* and Luke's story. Although Luke's story lacks an incognito heavenly guide, Jesus is self-guided in harmony with God's plan. Whatever the intertextuality between Tobit and the *Telemacheia*, Luke's story applying this shared tradition influenced mostly by the *Telemacheia* is plausible. Evocation of the *Telemacheia* highlights Jesus' surpassing precocity, divine filial intimacy with his Father, and concord with the divine plan in contrast to Telemachus' immaturity, Odyssean filial development, and necessary divine guidance according to the divine plan.

Luke employs a [virtual] theoxenic trope (§§2.1.1; 3.1.1) for the Nazareth pericope complemented by a punitive theophanic traversal trope (§3.1.7) for Jesus' escape functioning as the concluding departure and retribution (§§5.2.1; 5.2.5). The latter trope here is conveyed with the idiomatic 'passing through' expression evoking the locomotive manifestation (or 'visitation') of Yahweh or his chief agent(s) as enacted judgment amid wrongdoers. Luke 4:30 echoing Amos 5:17 is indeterminate given uncertainty about the Amos OG reading most familiar to Luke, but remains plausible. Although the description of Jesus' evasion conveniently lends to legitimate readings of invisibility/impalpability (§§2.1.4; 3.1.4; 5.2.2) or supernatural control (§§2.1.5; 3.1.8; 5.2.6), insufficient details preclude identifying more specific intertextual sources. Similarly, despite conceptual parallels or thematic resonances with divine hiddenness (§§3.1.5; 5.2.3) or Wisdom (§§3.1.6; 5.2.4), a lack of terminological affinities prevents establishing any strong intertextual relationships.

For Jesus' unrecognised visitation and departure in the Emmaus road episode, Luke applies a theoxenic trope with supernatural control motifs and immortal(ised) *aphaneia* concluding an epiphany (§§2.1.3; 3.1.3; 6.2). No particular intertextual sources are identifiable and the account differs from comparable theoxenic and post-translation appearances with an external force causing (im)perception.

Luke utilises motifs of epiphanic luminosity (§§2.1.2; 3.1.2), partial/selective (in)visibility (§§2.1.4; 3.1.4), and supernatural control (§§2.1.5; 3.1.8) for Paul's blinding and the companions' (im)perception during the Damascus road encounter in Acts, though without clues of specific intertextual sources for these phenomena (§7.2).

Aside from my focal episodes, supernatural control motifs (liberation and door miracles) are evident in the incarceration deliverances, divinely executed

apostolic pronouncements upon dissidents, and with angels (§§8.1.3; 8.2.3). The Philip-eunuch story contains xenic features and plausible Elijah/Elisha allusions, but the Spirit's seizure of Philip is a general pre-mortem assumption and terrestrial relocation motif (§8.1.4). Finally, luminous epiphany and immortal *aphaneia* motifs are also applied to angels (§8.2.1; 8.2.2). Ultimately, rather than identifiably specific intertextual sources for elusiveness, Luke applies several literary-conventional and thematic devices from an expansive gamut of extratextual data.

9.1.3. Literary and Theological Functions of Elusiveness

Elusiveness functions in several ways for narrative-rhetorical and theological purposes in Luke-Acts. Rhetorically, it captivates characters and the reader, for the latter producing intrigue and inviting contemplation of actions, events, and identities. Its frequent ambiguous depictions are no coincidence, but preserve reader intrigue especially by preventing over-familiarity with Jesus, subtly and progressively revealing Christology. Elusiveness causing character confusion or contemplation enables the reader to distance from them in their perplexity whilst emulating pondering or enquiry about Jesus, identifying with them in their imperfect comprehension (Luke 2:47-51; 4:22; Acts 9:5; 22:10; 26:15), especially as additional christological depictions and disclosures require ongoing rumination.¹²²¹ For example, although the reader knows that Jesus is not Joseph's son (Luke 4:22; cf. 3:23) but God's Son, their understanding of divine sonship is imperfect, like that of Jesus' own parents (2:50, 51b). Narrative-rhetorical educed contemplation reminds the reader that their christological ascertainment may be incomplete, but encourages continued discovery. The elusiveness theme continues into Luke's second volume filled with 'strange acts' (using Strelan's cleverly apt description) creating a stimulating recountal of apostolic endeavours. This theme builds suspense and creates curiosity, especially with hostility evasions, survivals, and incarceration deliverances by delaying the dénouements of Luke and Acts as the protagonists endure perils and overcome challenges.¹²²² Elusiveness also occurs during the Gospel's dénouement

¹²²¹ Not in the sense that Fowler (1996, 19-20, 155-56, cf. 254-55) suggests for Mark's 'messianic secret', attributing the reader's puzzlement and critics' inability to ascertain a coherent theme to narrative rhetoric of indirection.

¹²²² Similarly, Tolbert (1989) sees the 'messianic secret' delaying Mark's dénouement for Jesus to preach.

(Luke 24), but Acts concludes with a suspended/open narrative. Thus, theologically, elusiveness signifies missional indomitability and denotes transcendence of divine characters and the divine plan (cf. Acts 5:38-39). Luke's employment of *χαίρ*-idioms/*χαίρ*-terminology with hostility episodes casts the evasive Jesus as superior to disciples, creating irony as antagonists' hands seize the apostles and restrain their hands, incapacitating their ability to mediate wonders until divinely delivered (§§5.2.6; 8.1.2).

Narrative indeterminacies and ambiguities frequently imply supernatural activity in Lukan illustrations of elusiveness.¹²²³ The child Jesus' cryptic rejoinder when questioned about remaining in Jerusalem is devoid of an intelligible answer, raising more questions for the reader (Luke 2:48-49). Jesus' undernarrated Nazareth escape forms a noticeable gap (4:30). Passive forms expressing the Emmaus disciples' (im)perception encourage reader explanations (24:16, 31a). Even Jesus' subsequent departure must be construed in ways elucidating its manner and purpose (24:31b). The Damascus road accounts feature several indeterminacies about Paul's blinding and his companions' (im)perceptivity (Acts 9; 22; 26). Incarceration-deliverance narratives prompt reader speculation about oblivious guards (5:19-25; 12:6-10) or unsecured restraints (16:23-28). Narratives of the apostles' punitive declarations lead the reader to ponder executive causality (5:1-11; 8:4-25; 13:6-12). The reader also must supply details of Philip's relocation by the Spirit (8:39-40).

The misunderstanding motif contributes to elusiveness in my focal episodes vis-à-vis Christology, the gospel, and God's plan (Luke 2:49-50, 51b; 4:22, 28-30; 24:13-27 [cf. 24:44-47]; requiring Paul's Damascus road encounter). Misunderstanding persists into Acts (cf. 1:6), even after the Spirit is given—Peter and Paul embrace Gentile inclusion after divine revelation (Acts 10) and broad Jewish rejection (13:46), respectively. Misunderstanding and overcoming it express the exigency of Israel's decisive response to Jesus and the gospel, particularly given confounding messages of messianic suffering and Gentile inclusion. This is exemplary; the reader is challenged not to fall victim to perpetual cognitive errancies leading to rejecting Jesus, but to share in divine enlightenment among God's

¹²²³ Cf. Kermode (1979, 23-47) on obscure narrativity with a degree of opacity for the reader (and narrative audience) to understand and complete, but causing interpretive ambivalence (e.g., transparent or obscure parables).

kingdom, reassuring them about embracing and honouring Jesus (cf. Luke 1:4). Despite lingering questions, characters and the reader alike are bidden to advocate Jesus and the gospel.

Intratextual correspondences facilitate reader retrospection. Readings of disappearance or rapturous translocation at Nazareth will require modification given more conspicuous depictions of these phenomena, such as Jesus' Emmaus vanishing or Philip's seizure and relocation. Interpreting divine aid at Nazareth is also problematised upon encountering explicit depictions of it in incarceration deliverances. The reader aware that epiphanic luminosity is normally non-impairing in Luke-Acts infers an additional causation of Paul's blinding by Christophanic light. Intratextual affinities also highlight actional roles of elusiveness, instrumental in characterisation (see below §9.2.1).

Finally, superfluity of elusiveness is multifunctional. The child Jesus is self-sufficient whilst absent for three days. Jesus waits until he is led to a precipice outside Nazareth before escaping *through the midst* of aggressors. He deliberately remains unrecognisable to the Emmaus disciples and (dis)appears rather than accompanying them. Angelic figures bypass substantial security and leave incarceration sites resecured after deliverances. The Spirit rapturously relocates Philip on his expedition. Such nimeties generate suspense, form an epistemic chasm between the privileged reader and unapprised characters, produce indeterminacies affording reader input, or otherwise yield intriguing characters and events, all evincing Luke's reader-oriented rhetoric conditioning and engaging his reader. Superfluous elusiveness demonstrates supramundane power and identity. Jesus is δυνατός (Luke 24:19; cf. 18:27), evident by exhibiting δύναμις of elusiveness with an ease reputed of gods, contrastive to those who are incapable and rely on divine or numinous aid.

9.2. Identity Matters: Elusiveness and Lukan Christology

Since Luke strives to narrate accurate matters pertaining to Jesus (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2), the reader's portraiture of Jesus is *ipso facto* an exercise in ascertaining Lukan Christology. Although Jesus' elusiveness does not fashion a 'controlling Christology', it has christological implications. After summarising observations about character actional role and identity, I reflect on how insights emerging from my

topical investigation of elusiveness contribute an innovative perspective to scholarly dialogue on Lukan Christology.¹²²⁴

9.2.1. Who Does What: Character Actional Role Indicative of Character Identity

In this thesis, a significant criterion examined for ascertaining character identity is character actional role, which are mutually implicative. Actional role of supernatural elusiveness is a reliable indicator of either supramundane or human identities in the extratext and in Luke-Acts. Humans dependent on cosmic power in ancient Mediterranean literature are not ultimately reflexive/active agents of supernatural elusiveness such as invisibility, escape, (dis)appearance, or control. Jesus consistently exhibits reflexive/active elusiveness (notwithstanding his resurrection-ascension-exaltation) reputed of supramundane figures whereas his disciples are passively elusive by divine activity. Jesus delivers himself at Nazareth, not rescued by God or angels (contra Longenecker) like disciples relying on divine causality in Acts. This corroborates understandings of Jesus' endowment through the Spirit with cosmic power, bearing it independently and performing wonders by his own authority unlike disciples performing wonders through the Spirit by mediating or petitioning God's and Jesus' authority and power (see §8.1.3).¹²²⁵ For Luke's reader, all cosmic power is ultimately derived from Yahweh, so Jesus' reflexive/active supernatural elusiveness like that of supramundane figures (e.g., angels or even Satan and daimonic entities) indicates his theomorphic identity inextricable to Yahweh.¹²²⁶

9.2.2. Luke's Elusive Jesus as the Theomorphic Messiah

Reading Luke-Acts from an ancient Mediterranean perspective within an inclusive monotheistic framework illuminates theomorphism under which angelomorphism or other supramundane exhibitions, attributes, or depictions are subsumable (see §1.2). I summarise here how the theomorphically elusive Jesus comports with particular Christologies emerging in this thesis.

¹²²⁴ For §9.2 see details and references in §1.2.

¹²²⁵ Jesus' intimacy with the Spirit continues during his resurrection appearances (cf. Acts 1:1-3) and post-ascension (see n. 1106).

¹²²⁶ Character actional role implicating identity is exemplified by Simon Magus in *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 2.9 (ca. fourth-century CE) boasting of elusive and other preternatural abilities (several of which reflect interpretations of elusiveness in Luke-Acts) evincing his divinity (cf. *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 2.32).

i. Jesus as Suffering and Royal-Davidic Messiah

Christologies of Jesus' suffering (Conzelmann; O'Toole; Buckwalter) and royal-Davidic messiahship (Bock; Strauss; Miura; Kirk) emerge with elusiveness. Miura understands the presentation of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah with divine sonship and lordship to portray his divinity.¹²²⁷ For Strauss, Jesus the Davidic Messiah is nevertheless 'apparently subordinate' to God.¹²²⁸ Miura recognises a David-Jesus typology as righteous sufferer (Luke 4:28-29; 6:1-5, 11), including building on Wright's recognition of David and Jesus as journeying with followers (1 Sam 19-30; Luke 9:51-19:28).¹²²⁹ My investigation improves christological understandings of Jesus' royal-Davidic messiahship by considering his hostility evasions as characteristic of David eluding Saul's hands who seeks him and sends messengers to watch and entrap him (1 Sam 18-27; cf. Ps 31; see §5.2.6). God paradoxically causes Saul's hostility and departs from him whilst preserving David to be the anointed king according to the divine plan whereas Jesus preserves himself, departing from enemies whilst cognisantly involved in the fruition of the divine plan. Jesus' elusiveness both reveals his special knowledge of God's plan for messianic suffering and ensures its fulfilment despite obstacles, avoiding an untimely passion. Elusiveness, involving journeying and misunderstanding, contributes to Christology and a theme beyond a *Leidensgeheimnis* (§§9.1.1; 9.1.3), especially with Jesus controlling cognition/perception (Chapter 6), expressing his exceptionally theomorphic identity as the suffering and royal-Davidic Messiah.

ii. Jesus as Divine Visitor

Although scholars demonstrating the prominence of divine visitation and (in)hospitality in Luke-Acts focus on thematic rather than christological significance (among others: Robinson; Denaux; Byrne; Jipp), their recognition that this theme principally involves God visiting his people through Jesus is an observation about Christology (see §1.1.1.iii). Jesus is revealed as a divine visitor already in the infancy narrative—emphasising Yahweh's visitation through Jesus the ἀνατολή from on high

¹²²⁷ Miura 2007, 233.

¹²²⁸ Strauss 1995, 349-51, cf. 87-97; see n. 159.

¹²²⁹ Miura 2007, 168-74, 216-17; Wright 1992, 308.

associated with royal-Davidic messiahship (Luke 1:68-79)¹²³⁰—and with the journey motif (7:16, 36-50; 9:51-56; 10:1-16, 38-42; 15:1-2; 19:1-10; cf. Acts 15:14), including by his cryptic statement that the people fail to recognise the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). His elusiveness consistently enriches a divine visitor Christology. Jesus' first action is an elusive (non-theoxenic) visitation to the temple by divine necessity, and his first speech is an enigmatic riposte about his conduct which prefigures his entire vocation, not only pertaining to his remaining behind (2:41-52; Chapter 4).¹²³¹ I noted how scholars comment on the programmatic significance of the Nazareth pericope for the divine visitation theme (Denaux) or recognise some specific elements of this (Byrne; Jipp), but I expanded these observations by reading a positive-turned-negative [virtual] theoxenic episode, foreshadowing divided responses to Jesus through whom God visits (4:16-30; Chapter 5). After Jesus' resurrection, he tests his disciples as an unrecognised sojourner during the theoxenic Emmaus road episode (24:13-35; Chapter 6). Reading Jesus as the agent of control and (dis)appearance in Luke 24 supports a theomorphic visitation more than a divinely aided or unrecognisable hero account (contra Whitaker; see §6.2.1). The theoxenic Nazareth and Emmaus episodes—forming an *inclusio* of the Gospel with Jesus as God's visitor throughout—are particularly reminiscent of Euripides' *Bacchae* portraying the elusive Dionysus' theoxenic visitation to Thebes first of the Greek cities where he exhibits supernatural control and reveals his identity during a concluding disappearance (§§2.1.1.ii; 2.1.3.i; 2.1.5.ii). Jesus' [virtual] theoxenic ministry with divided rejection and acceptance (including as 'king') is also conceptually similar to unrecognised king Odysseus' homecoming with divided responses, though Odysseus visits in the manner of a deity, not also on behalf of a deity. Moreover, Jesus supernaturally departs by his own ability, unlike mortals in virtual theoxenies. Finally, Jesus' disciples continue the divine visitation theme, paralleling his ministry, though with occasional ascribed theoxenies (e.g., Acts 8:26-40; 14:8-20; 28:1-10; cf. Luke 10:1-16) contrastive to Jesus' real divine visitation. Elusiveness bolsters a divine visitor Christology by underlining opportunities for characters and the reader to recognise God's visitation

¹²³⁰ Strauss 1995, 97-108, 299.

¹²³¹ Also Byrne 2000, 37 n. 8.

through his Messiah and highlighting the significance of responses to Jesus or the gospel which determine either blessing or detriment.

iii. Jesus as Judge

Some scholars see Jesus' role as judge exercised eschatologically (Conzelmann; Marshall; O'Toole) and others understand his judicial activity already at God's right hand (Buckwalter; Strauss), a position of a ruler and judge where he is seated at his resurrection-ascension-exaltation (Luke 22:67-69; Acts 2:33-36; 5:31; 7:55-56). Jesus brings a baptism of fire (symbolising final judgment) that he wishes was already commenced, which John misconceives as concurrent with the Messiah's coming (Luke 3:9, 15-17; 12:49-53; cf. 13:31-35).¹²³² Nevertheless, a judge Christology is inherent to a divine visitor Christology entailing ultimate blessing or detriment; judgment is a typical theoxenic element, especially with a divided response (e.g., Euripides' *Bacchae*; Ovid, *Metam.* 8.612-724) such as Jesus experiences. O'Toole recognises christological expressions of Jesus as teacher, prophet, saviour, servant of Yahweh, and rejected Davidic Messiah in the Nazareth account.¹²³³ I add Jesus as judge considering this programmatic episode representing Israel's divided response and applying theoxenic and punitive theophanic traversal tropes, the latter which normally involves Yahweh (Exod 12:12 [cf. 12:23]; Amos 5:17 [cf. 7:8, 8:2]), his Spirit (4Q248 5), or angelic mediators (Ezek 9:1-11) employed for Jesus' departure 'passing through the midst' of his people (§§3.1.7; 5.2.5). Responses to Jesus and the gospel are decisive of judgment (Luke 6:47-49; 10:16; cf. 7:30; 9:48; Acts 3:13-15; 4:10-12; 13:46; 24:25) which Jesus will inevitably execute (Acts 10:42; 17:31). Already during his ministry, Jesus' elusive presence brings divine visitation and verdict.

iv. Jesus as Wisdom of God

We saw how scholars interpret Luke's childhood story (§4.1.3) as depicting Jesus possessing wisdom (Strauss; Bovon; Stählin) or bearing and teaching wisdom (Schürmann; Christ). Others see it prefiguring Jesus' later depiction as Wisdom

¹²³² Green 1997, 181-82, 295, 404-405, 415-16, 505-516, cf. 533-39. Marshall (1978, 546-47) sees fire/judgment coming with the Spirit's division of the righteous and wicked.

¹²³³ O'Toole 2008, 17-18, 29-30, 42, 55-56, 105-106, 118-21; cf. 1995.

(Ellis) or detect a sonship-wisdom relation (Grundmann). At least Laurentin detects the seeking-finding motif common in Wisdom traditions and other correspondences to Wisdom in Sir 24. My reading of the story expanded these interpretations, offering further support for seeing Jesus depicted as Wisdom. Luke's infancy narrative casts Jesus as a divine-human figure from conception, so the reader anticipates exhibitions of his divine qualities. The glimpse into his childhood then shows his first actions and speech to be elusive, saturated with linguistic cues and the seeking-finding motif corresponding to Wisdom traditions, including Wisdom's: depiction as God's child; relation to withdrawn and sought understanding whose location is uncertain; association with torah; self-hiddenness; being sought and [not] found; desire to dwell in Jerusalem; and location in the temple (§§3.1.6; 4.2.2). Jesus' later isolating activity resembles elusive Wisdom, especially with antagonists filled with ἄνοια and seeking him (6:11; §4.2.2), as does his avoidance and silence whilst interrogated (22:67-23:3, 9). Although the Nazareth episode lacks conspicuous Wisdom references, subtle allusions are detectable: Jesus' τοῖς λόγοις τῆς χάριτος (Luke 4:22) recalling his childhood (2:40, 52); his pneumatic empowerment in Galilee in the light of the Spirit-Wisdom association; and his departure after rejection (§5.2.4). Finally, the pedagogical stages and hospitality of Wisdom in Pro 1-9 parallel the Emmaus narrative (rebuke: 24:25; instruction: 24:27; host: 24:30), as Brown observes, in which Jesus' conduct also accords with Wisdom's disguise as a stranger visiting and testing the one who seeks, loves, and embraces her (Sir 4:11-19 [4:17 Hebrew]; §6.2.1). Although some scholars dismiss a Lukan Wisdom Christology (Green; Bovon), Jesus' elusiveness portrayed with recourse to elusive Wisdom traditions in these episodes are included among other Jesus-Wisdom associations (Luke 7:34-35; 9:41, 58; 10:21-24; 11:31, 49; 13:31-35; 21:15). My study of elusiveness highlights this implicit Wisdom Christology in Luke, further portraying a theomorphic Jesus.

v. Jesus as Son of God

A Son of God Christology frequently emerges with Jesus' elusiveness. This is illuminated by the childhood story read alongside the *Telemacheia*. Telemachus' maturation is overdue and crucial for maintaining authority in his father's house, so he is divinely aided on a necessary journey, including conformity to his family's elusive character, though he is unaware of the overarching divine plan. The elusive

child Jesus is prodigious, exhibiting intentionality, sovereignty, and surpassing precocity on a necessary journey, harmonised with his Father’s will and plan as the Son of God, indicative of an intimate divine filial relationship and theomorphism beyond messiological connotations of divine sonship (Luke 2:41-52).¹²³⁴ Jesus’ Nazareth visitation evokes and reinforces a Son of God Christology with his paternal sonship questioned (4:22). His cryptic statement embedded between indications of his heavenly authority transmitted and unveiled to his seventy[-two] emissaries discloses that exclusive knowledge of the Father and his Son—to whom he entrusts authority and the prerogative of revelation—are concealed from some but revealed to others (10:21-22; cf. 10:1-20, 23-24). This enigmatic utterance is an explanatory key; characters and the reader aware of Jesus’ divine sonship cannot truly know him, his Father, or truths of the kingdom without humility and enlightenment by the Son. Thus, when asked if he is the Son of God, Jesus offers a brief, cryptic riposte: ‘You say that I am’ (22:70). This divine sonship continues after his resurrection (24:49) and narrativised ascension which Paul proclaims as a result of his transformative Christophanic encounter (Acts 9:20). Although Jesus’ divine sonship mostly expresses royal-Davidic messiahship, a theomorphic Son of God Christology emerges with his elusiveness—indirectly and enigmatically revealed by him or signified by his conduct recognised and disclosed by others—reminding the reader that Jesus’ exceptional filial relationship to God entails his supramundane transcendence.

vi. Concluding Implications of Elusiveness for a Theomorphic Christology

My study of elusiveness illuminated more continuity of Jesus’ pre- and post-mortem physical transience than critics allow who infer Jesus’ post-resurrection special or acquired bodily properties which minimises this consistency (see §6.1.1). Foster sees no explicit polymorphic representations in Jesus’ Nazareth escape, transfiguration (notwithstanding transformation and light evincing some metamorphosis), Emmaus road episode (unlike LEM) where “special bodily properties” enable (dis)appearances, or Damascus road manifestation.¹²³⁵ Foster is

¹²³⁴ Also beyond a servanthood Christology (*pace* Buckwalter 1996, 249-50). On divine sonship connoting messianism, kingship, and divinity see Fredriksen 1988, 138-41; Yarbrow Collins and Collins 2008.

¹²³⁵ Foster 2007, 68-77.

rightly cautious, but perhaps less willing than ancient readers to interpret material transcendence in ambiguously narrated instances of the pre-mortem Jesus' elusiveness. Yet, Foster, like many other scholars, is willing to ascribe post-resurrection phenomena to Jesus' acquired bodily properties, a notion about which Luke is silent. We saw how Lukan representations of the pre-mortem Jesus' elusiveness direct the reader to conceptualise Jesus' physical transience. Implications of the child Jesus' superhumanity accommodated early (non-NT) Christian stories, further illustrating his supernatural abilities, sovereignty, and polymorphism.¹²³⁶ The Nazareth escape narrative elicits reading a miracle, fuelling early Christian discourse about Jesus' nature—occasionally associating his evasion with his resurrection appearances or retrojecting resurrection qualities into his pre-mortem life—including interpretations of his somatic malleability or impalpability (Irenaeus, *Fr.* 52; cf. Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.8.2-3; §§5.2.2; 6.2.1). Jesus' elusiveness furnished early depictions of his superhuman somatic capacities. Nonetheless, although incipient docetic notions occasioned some concern about Jesus' pre-mortem physical transience with respect to his genuine humanity, this physical transience was christologically unproblematic for Luke and his ancient reader. Thus, my investigation of elusiveness offered additional instances supporting Gathercole's understanding of Jesus' 'transcendence' indicating his 'heavenly identity'.

This thesis exemplified the advantage of conceptualising divinity and monotheism in terms of theomorphism with respect to a particular topos (elusiveness) by offering a realistic model for how Luke's ancient reader would have thought about Christology within their ancient Mediterranean milieu. This theomorphism scheme helpfully incorporated supramundane figures and phenomena as sharing in the form of 'God' to various degrees without obscuring distinctions. Rather than taking Jesus' pre- and post-mortem physical transience as mainly angelomorphic (so Fletcher-Louis),¹²³⁷ Luke's reader properly orients angelomorphism as a subset of theomorphism and understands Jesus' elusiveness as essentially theomorphic. Jesus' elusiveness demonstrates his theomorphic sovereignty by knowingly executing God's necessary plan already from childhood then making his disciples elusive in his

¹²³⁶ See nn. 507, 537.

¹²³⁷ Fletcher-Louis 1997, 38-70, 242, 249. Jesus' transfiguration includes non-strictly angelomorphic elements (§§5.2.2; 7.1.2).

ascended-exalted state. Although Jesus' elusiveness indicates an identity more theomorphic than typical of humans or angels and remarkably proximate to Yahweh (see §§8.3; 9.2.1), Luke preserves identity distinctions between Jesus and the supreme θεός/πατήρ which the descriptor 'divine' or shared-identity Christology models might blur (i.e., Bauckham's model and derivatives). Jesus' elusiveness, even pre-mortem, lends to his identity as an unmatched theomorphic figure (perhaps 'chief-agent', to use Hurtado's label), though retaining his individual identity (a distinction which Fletcher-Louis' and Litwa's Christology schemes stress). Luke-Acts does not convey the extent of Jesus' metaphysical relationship to ὁ θεός/πατήρ,¹²³⁸ but, at the very least, Jesus' elusive presence indicates his exceptional theomorphism. Jesus perpetuates and embodies Yahweh's elusive presence, as Terrien avers, "At the dawn of the Roman Empire, a handful of Jews hailed from their own ranks a new prophet through whom they discerned a radically new mode of divine nearness. A man became for them the bearer of the presence".¹²³⁹

9.3. Concluding Remarks

The Lukan elusiveness theme principally involves and is inspired by the elusive Jesus, and includes other elusive characters and events which provide additional material for the reader to further ascertain Lukan Christology. Luke creates opportunities for his reader to ponder Jesus' elusiveness and, consequently, his identity. The reader repeatedly and cumulatively discovers that Jesus' elusiveness suggests his exceptionally theomorphic identity and exceeding intimacy with God. Characters, the reader, and modern critics alike can attest to bewildering paradoxes produced by elusiveness in Luke-Acts. Ironically, Luke writes to clarify teachings about Jesus familiar to the reader (Luke 1:4), yet ambiguous narratives encourage or require reader contemplation of Jesus' conduct and identity. Even after (re-)reading, intrigue persists for the reader and critic who both strive for a clearer understanding of the elusive Jesus.

¹²³⁸ Conzelmann 1960, 170-84; Franklin 1975, 76.

¹²³⁹ Terrien 2000, 405.

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