

§140. Jesus Goes to Jerusalem!(Luke 9:51–56)

Introduction

Lord completes His Galilean ministry and started His final journey to Jerusalem. He left Galilee and entered Samaria and faced rejection there. Lord uses this as an opportunity to teach his disciples that the ministry should characterise grace and mercy of the Lord even when it is rejected.

Exposition

51 **Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,**

When time had come: Jesus waited on the father for all his action. He is dictated not by human plan and suggestion.

Steadfastly set His face: Determination of the Lord to accomplish the task before Him. The word **face** is repeated three times in this passage indicating his focus.

52 **and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him.**

Sent messengers shows that the ministry of Jesus was not random or impulsive. It was carefully planned and meticulously executed. These messengers were probably some of his disciples who went ahead and made preparations for his ministry.

Samaritans: are half Jews. They belong to the ten northern tribes who went to captivity during Assyrian aggression. They consider only the Pentateuch as authentic, they think the place of worship is mount Gilgal and not Jerusalem. They mingled with many gentile nations. Hence, Jews will not associate with Samaritans. They will not normally travel through Samaria to go to Jerusalem.

Samaritans: spiritual state is well described by **2 Kings 17:24–33**.

Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. 25 And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. 26 So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land.” 27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, “Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land.” 28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. 29 However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt. 30 The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32 So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.

53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

They did not receive Him: This reminds of the reception Jesus received two year back. We read that in **John 4:39–42**. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” 40 So when the

Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Jerusalem: Reason for rejection is that Jesus was going to Jerusalem. The Samaritans limited the canon to the Pentateuch. As a result, they accepted as authoritative only Deut. 12:5. "But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.. For a Samaritan, "the place" had already been chosen by God and the identity of the location would be found in the Pentateuch itself. The Jews, on the other hand, viewed the statement as forward-pointing to future revelation. The Jew concluded Jerusalem was the place: there David determined to build a temple to God, and God solemnly authorized his son Solomon to do so. There sacrifice was divinely sanctioned, the temple site retaining its significance when Zerubbabel rebuilt it after it was destroyed, and when later still Herod rebuilt it. The Samaritans used the following Pentateuch-based logic to support their identification of "the place" as Gerizim:

- (a) The first place Abraham built an altar after entering the Promised Land was in Shechem, overlooked by Mount Gerizim
- (b) God instructed the covenant community to shout the blessings from Mount Gerizim once they had entered the promised land (Deut. 11:29. "And it shall come about, when the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.")
- (c) Both instances of the 10 Commandments (Ex. 20:17, Dt. 5:21) in the Samaritan Bible are followed by words very similar to those found in (Dt. 27:2-7), tying the Commandments themselves to Gerizim.

54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?”

James and John: Mark 3:17. James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”;. They were with Jesus during the transfiguration and met Elijah. One must accept the zeal and boldness of these disciples.

55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

Rebuked: Why the Lord rebuked them, especially when many rejected Jesus and these disciples were with the Lord. The root cause is more than zeal, ignorance and deep rooted hatred towards Samaritans.

- (a) God told Elijah and it was not the idea of Elijah. 2 Kings 1:3–4. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ 4 Now therefore, thus says the LORD: ‘You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’” So Elijah departed.
- (b) Hence, Elijah brought fire. 2 Ki 1:10. So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty..
- (c) Ministry of Elijah was controlled by God and not dictated by whims and fancies of Elijah.

56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.

1. Zeal is good, but when not accompanied by knowledge is dangerous.

2 Cor 10:4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every

high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

2. Disciples failed to understand the mission of Jesus and what He expected from His disciples.

Manner of spirit: The second reason for the rebuke is the motive is this judgement was not out of their zeal for the Lord, but raised out of their hatred to Samaritans. Note that these disciples did not respond when Pharisees and multitudes rejected Christ.

Applications

1. Focus and determination is required in life and ministry. Deal with distractions.
2. Patient waiting, careful planning, and meticulous execution marks the ministry of the church. Let the Spirit control our ministry.
3. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous for it invites rebuke from the Lord rather than rewards. Knowledge without zeal is useless.
4. Ministry is receiving mercy/grace and showing it to even those who reject it. Vengeance belong to God.