

- A 'travel narrative'

- A twisting and turning route to Jerusalem avoiding Herod

### 1. The central purpose of Jesus' earthly life is to go to Jerusalem to die.

- To give his life as a ransom for many sinners

- The cost of immense suffering

### 2. The cross of Jesus was part of His plan not to judge sinners but to save them.

- Not distracted by Samaritan opposition

- The disciples must learn to have Jesus' love in their attitudes

Luke 9:51 to Luke 18:14 is distinctive to Luke's Gospel. It is a 'travel narrative'. As Jesus travels He ministers to the people of Israel and teaches His disciples.

Jesus is ready to die in Jerusalem. He travels there by a twisting and turning route (avoiding Herod). The journey to Jerusalem is emphasised three times in these chapters (Luke 9:51; 13:22; 17:11) but it is all the same journey. Whether Luke 9:51 to 18:14 is in chronological order or not is debatable. It is not easy to tell whether Luke has altered the order of events to put stories of the same kind side-by-side. Certainly everything in 9:51 to 18:14 happened at some stage on the lengthy journey to Jerusalem. Judging from Luke's use of Mark elsewhere, it is likely that Luke 9:51–18:14 is basically in chronological order but there might be a few events told out of order so as to put similar material together.

**1. The central purpose of Jesus' earthly life is to go to Jerusalem to die.** Verse 51 says '*And it came about, when the days were approaching for Him to be received up, that He set His face to go to Jerusalem*'. The Greek for 'received up' is a word that often refers to death, but there can be no doubt that it includes the idea of Jesus' being 'taken back' to God's presence, just as Elijah was 'taken up' into heaven (note the reference to Elijah in 9:54, which echoes 2 Kings 2:1, 10, 12). Jesus knows that He is being 'taken up' to His Father via His death upon the cross.

Jesus Himself knew from early days in His life that He had come into this world to die. His baptism was a call to die for sinners. The voice from heaven called Him to be the Suffering Servant of the predictions of Isaiah. At Caesarea Philippi He told the disciples that He must be killed and after three days rise again. Now He is on His last journey to Jerusalem. He knows what is to happen to Him. Yet He was determined to give His life as a ransom for many.

What amazing dedication we find in Jesus! How determined He was to do God's will, even at the cost of immense suffering.

**2. The cross of Jesus was part of His plan not to judge sinners but to save them.** He is travelling towards Jerusalem. On the way He enters a Samaritan village but they reject Him because they hear He is going to Jerusalem<sup>□1</sup>. There was a terrible hatred between Samaritans and Jews. The Samaritans hated Jerusalem; they had a corrupt and twisted version of the faith of the Old Testament. 2 Kings 17:24–34 tells the story of their beginnings. But the opposition of the Samaritans did not distract Jesus. The cross is more important to Him than His relationship to the Samaritans; He keeps travelling to Jerusalem. James and John are indignant. Imagining Jesus to be like Elijah they feel they should call fire from heaven, as Elijah did according to 2 Kings 1:10–12. How strange that Jesus should be going to the cross to save sinners, but His disciples are eager to call judgement down upon sinners. Jesus did not come to judge sinners. James and John were at this stage of their lives 'sons of thunder'<sup>□2</sup>, but Jesus '*did not come to judge the world, but came in order to save the world*'<sup>□3</sup>.

The cross in Jesus' life must become the cross in the disciples' life. He is walking to the cross to save Samaritans and He will single them out for special blessing ('and Samaria'<sup>□1</sup>). Jesus loves Samaritans; the disciples must learn to have Jesus' love in their attitudes. Otherwise they miss the point of Jesus' cross.

□1 9:52-53

□2 Mrk 3:17

□3 John 3:17

□1 Acts 1:8

### 3. The cross of Jesus invites our discipleship

• A man - too eager

• A man who wanted to delay

• A man – reluctant to go further in serving God

• Fruitfulness and reaping the full blessings of the Kingdom

3. **The cross of Jesus invites our discipleship.** One of Jesus' followers is very eager to follow Him. 'I will follow you wherever you go', he says. It is important to remember that 'following Jesus' was a quite literal matter. It was a matter of becoming a 'trainee' in the work of the kingdom by travelling with Jesus to learn to do what He did.

The man is too eager. He needs to face the fact that there is hardship and suffering in following Jesus. Jesus has no home of His own<sup>□1</sup> and there will be no luxuries for followers of Jesus. Today's disciples need to remember the same point: there are few luxuries for those who go all the way with God – only the delicious joy of having His approval.

Another man is the exact opposite to the first. Jesus invites him for training and ministry in His kingdom<sup>□1</sup>, but the man wants to delay ministry until after his father has died<sup>□2</sup>. Jesus' answer is: people who are spiritually dead must at times be left to take care of their own affairs; disciples cannot delay obedience because of them<sup>□3</sup>. Actually Jesus' death is itself only a few weeks' away. Jesus will probably die before the father!

Another would-be disciple is the exact opposite. He has been with Jesus thus far, but now he wants a period with his family before he commits himself to a further step<sup>□1</sup>. Jesus sees that he is simply reluctant to go any further in serving God. 'No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God', He says. Anyone who becomes a believer and starts serving God, 'putting his hand to the plough', but then starts drawing back will lose out in his experience of the kingdom. This is not a statement about salvation (for salvation is by faith not by 'putting one's hand to the plough'). Rather it is about fruitfulness and reaping the full blessings of the kingdom of God.

□1 9:58

□1 9:59a  
□2 9:59b

□3 9:60

□1 9:61



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