

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 9- Luke 9:51-56

188- Jesus Was Determined To Go To Jerusalem- Part 1

December 2, 2012

Luke 9:51-56

51 When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;

52 and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.

53 But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

54 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?"

55 But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "**You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;**

56 **for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.**"]
And they went on to another village.

To the Glory of God

It never ceases to amaze me as I see how people go about celebrating this time of year- as so many have such romantic and tender thoughts of a Baby in a manger and talk about concepts like "giving" and love" and "peace" and "goodwill" and yet have such utter disdain for the grown Man that this Baby became and to see such absolute rejection of this Man's Teaching and His Words and have such little regard for loving and serving and obeying the Man this Baby grew up to be and to see almost no concern for what He has commanded and what honors and glorifies Him.

It is also disheartening to listen to so many in the modern Church as they seem to believe that Jesus came to this earth for no other reason other than to make this their best life now and to give them more stuff

and to help them fulfill all their dreams and to hit more home runs and have more money and drive nicer cars and to live in a bigger house- that in effect- God exists for no other reason than to give them what they want; when they want it- lest they may stub their toe and not have a happy day.

And all while many of the people of the modern Church have become so self-absorbed and so self-conscious- Jesus was operating under an entirely different vision that was foretold at least 700 years earlier from the golden tongued prophet Isaiah when he said this in **Isaiah 53:10:**

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief...

So what we must understand is that God's Will for Jesus in His *first* Advent was very different than what *our* will might have been had we been alive back then and it was very different from what the will of the Apostles was. Jesus came the first time to die. He was born to die. He will come the *second* time to rule and reign and to be admired and to be feared and worshipped- but it was God's perfect Will for Jesus to come the *first* time to be rejected and to be mocked and for Jesus to be captured and tried and found guilty and to be spit on and nailed to a tree and to hang there like a common criminal and to die in great agony. That was God's Will. And Jesus loved His Father infinitely and desired to obey His Father's Will perfectly and that is why He desired to go to Jerusalem.

Now the first thing we need to understand about this Passage here at the end of **Luke 9** is that Jesus being determined to go to Jerusalem meant something very different for Jesus than it did for the Apostles. Back in verse 46- the Apostles began to argue among themselves and from that we can see the visions of greatness that danced in their heads.

As far as they were concerned- Jerusalem and personal glory were just around the corner. We must remember that their understanding of the things of God that we take for granted was very different from ours. Words and terms and concepts that thrill our hearts meant something quite different to them than it does to us today. For example:

To these 12 men- "Salvation" didn't mean a gracious rescuing from the Wrath of God based on trusting in the Life, Death and Resurrection

of Jesus Christ- it meant a physical deliverance from being ruled and dominated by the pagan Romans. The "Mission of the Messiah" was not to die on the Cross to satisfy the Righteous Judgment of God against all sin- it was to militarily and politically vanquish the Roman infidels. To be a "Child of God" was not to be born again by the Sovereign Regeneration of God the Holy Spirit- it was to be an animal sacrificing temple worshipping Jew.

So to these men- for Jesus to be determined to go to Jerusalem didn't mean an arrest and a mock trial and an agonizing Crucifixion- it meant vindication and glory and acceptance and a royal crowning when Jesus would ride triumphantly down the main street of the capital city as thousands lined the streets praising Him for his great victory over the pagans and for Jesus to victoriously walk into the Temple and sit down on the throne of King David and from there- He would rule the world with a rod of iron. That is the vision that the Apostles had when Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem.

But Jesus had a completely different vision in his head. And we can only imagine how He carried that vision all alone for so long. Here's what Jerusalem meant for Jesus:

Luke 13:33b

... I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next *day*; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem meant only one thing for Jesus- certain death. And not just *any* death- but death by Crucifixion- a death that was so horribly painful that the Church had to invent a word to describe this terrible pain. The word, "agonize" had to be created to describe the unbelievable suffering associated with Crucifixion.

Jesus was under no illusion that He would be graced with a quick and heroic death. He predicted the way in which He would die in **Luke 18:31** when He said:

Luke 18:31b-33

31 ... Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished.

32 For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon,

33 and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again."

... so when Jesus set His Face to go to Jerusalem- It was a determination to die.

Now when you think of Jesus' determination to die- you must remember that He had a human nature just like ours. He shrunk back from pain just like we do. He would have enjoyed marriage and children and grandchildren and a long life and esteem in the community just as we do. He had a mother and brothers and sisters and loved them as much as we do. He had special places in the mountains He enjoyed visiting.

So for Jesus to turn His Back on all this and set His Face towards absolute rejection and a vicious whipping and beating and spitting and mocking and crucifixion was not easy. It was very *hard*! O how we need to use our imagination to put ourselves into His place and try to imagine what He felt!

And we must remember that this was not out of *obligation*. Jesus didn't do this out of a *sense of duty* or because it simply needed to be done. No, this was the single most perfect example of Love that the world has ever known. This was pure unadulterated selfless Love. Absolute and complete love and devotion to God the Father; absolute surrender of His Own Will to the Father's Will; absolute submission of His Own Desires to the leading of God the Holy Spirit and total and complete and focused love towards elected sinners- who are patently unworthy.

I can't even imagine a better way for us to see and know how much Jesus loved us than this Act of going to Jerusalem to be tried; convicted and to be murdered on a tree. Jesus Himself talked about this in **John 15:13** when He said:

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

So as we see the unbelievable manifestation of greed and materialism and selfishness this time of year- we need to remember that Jesus lived His entire life as a continued example of giving and selflessness and an abandonment of personal ambition and of freely and willingly submitting Himself to the Father's Will.

Now if we were to look at Jesus' death merely as a result of a betrayer's deceit or the Sanhedrin's envy or Pilate's spinelessness or the soldiers' nails and spear- then it might seem very *involuntary*. And the benefit of Salvation that comes to us who believe from this death might be viewed as God's Way of simply making a virtue out of a necessity- of *turning* something horrible into something good. But once you read **Luke 9:51** all such thoughts should vanish forever.

Jesus was not accidentally entangled in a web of injustice. Jesus was not caught up in a power struggle between the Empire of Rome and Palestine in the 1st Century. The saving benefits of Jesus' death for sinners were not an afterthought. God didn't take the injustice of a kangaroo court and an unjust sentencing and a death on a cross and turn it into something good after the fact.

No- God the Father planned all of this way before He created the Universe out of nothing and way before He made Man out of the dust of the earth and way before Adam fell and way before any of these people were ever even thought about. God did all of this on purpose out of His Own infinite Love to sinners like us and at the exact appointed time of God's predetermined choosing.

Here Jesus- Who was the very embodiment of his Father's Love for sinners- sees that the time has now come for Him to go and fulfill the Father's Will as to why He was born in the first place- not to go into Jerusalem victoriously; not to be received with great fanfare; not to be accepted by the ruling authorities; not to be worshipped by the religious elite; not to be loved and admired; not to be crowned a King- but to go to Jerusalem and be rejected and mocked and spit on and tortured and to die- screaming in agony for our sake.

Over the years since Jesus mercifully saved my wretched soul- every year about this time- there is a great controversy that erupts as to just who was guilty of killing Jesus. Some say the Jews killed Jesus. Others say that it was the Romans. Some say that we all killed Him because of our sins. But let's listen to the only Authority that really matters and that is the Lord Jesus Himself as to what He said Himself about this in **John 10:17&18**

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.

18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

So Jesus sets out for Jerusalem to *voluntarily* lay down His Life because it was His Father's Will and it was what God the Holy Spirit was leading Him to do and it was what we required and Jesus loved us and Jesus loved His Father and Jesus loved the Holy Spirit. Now with all this in mind- please read **Luke 9:51** with me again:

When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;

Now this passage begins with this phrase:

When the days were approaching...

... and that is an indefinite statement. So Luke is telling us that some time has passed since the last episode that verses 46 to 50 dealt with. Now it is probably not a long time- maybe later that same day or the day after or just a few days after the last period of time in the Life and Ministry of Jesus. And so Luke is telling us that at some point after the events covered in verses 46-50- Jesus began to be determined to go to Jerusalem.

But in the middle of this verse- the good doctor uses the Greek word, "*analepsis*" which means: *ascension or lifting up*. And this could mean either Jesus' literal and bodily Ascension into Heaven or His "lifting up" on the Cross to die. It could mean either one.

But whichever one Luke meant- this passage is a huge transition. You see, up to now- everything in Luke's Gospel Account has been focusing on Jesus' *Coming*- on the Messiah's *Coming*. All the prophecies in the first chapter; the angel's announcement of John Baptist- the forerunner; the angel coming to Mary; the announcement to Mary; the meeting with Elizabeth; all the genealogies.

And all of a sudden Jesus comes and He's born and we have all the narrative around His birth with the shepherds and the wise men and the dreams and signs and wonders and miracles. And then Jesus comes to the temple at twelve and all those years go by and finally He

embarks upon His ministry and He comes into Judea first, then He comes to Galilee and He's there well over a year in His ministry. And now the long awaited Messiah has come and He's going from place to place; town to town; village to village.

And His coming reaches its pinnacle at the Mount of Transfiguration in this chapter, verses 28 to 36. And He's come all the way to the peak of Revelation and there on the Mount, Peter, James and John literally see Jesus transfigured- they see He is the eternal Son of God with the Glory that He had with the father before the world was and the Glory that Jesus has with the Father right now and the Glory in which Jesus will return to this earth.

Jesus is the Glory of God- He is the very Shekinah incarnate and they also see Moses and Elijah and they are there and they see the fullness of His Revelation- the Coming of the Messiah in fullness.

And that's the high point of Jesus' Coming- and now they start down the mountain in verse 37 and things begin to change. Up to that point- everything was about His Coming. But from this point all the way to end of this Book- Luke will concentrate on Jesus' Going. And now here in Verse 51- Jesus is determined to go to Jerusalem. The King James says, **"He set His Face to go to Jerusalem"**. So there is a Plan; a Determination; a purposeful action.

And now the entire tenor of the Gospel of Luke is going to dramatically change. Up to this point we've been talking about how Jesus is the Messiah and so He's revealing Himself as the Messiah- through all the evidence that is provided- all the miracles; all the healings; all the vesting out of demons; all the Authority over Creation and fish and wind and waves and the Power to forgive sin- all of the signs of Jesus' Deity are there. And Dr. Luke is saying, *"Look, Theophilus, at Jesus' Power and Authority. Look at His miracles. I am giving you irrefutable proof that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah and the only Savior of the world!"* And Luke has been faithful to give this Greek dignitary all this information so that Luke can do what he said he was doing at the very beginning of this Book when he said:

Luke 1:1-4

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,

- 2** just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,
- 3** it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;
- 4** so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

So Luke has written everything in this Gospel Account that bears his name and **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles** so that Theophilus and everybody else who reads this two Book set will:

... know the exact truth about the things you have been taught

So anytime you meet somebody who is wavering in their faith or somebody who is doubting what they believe or somebody who wants to know exactly what to believe or somebody who wants to know what Christianity is- point them to these two Books:

- ✓ The Gospel of Luke
- ✓ The Acts of the Apostles

Because these two Books were written by a Gentile for Gentiles so that there would be no doubt and no confusion about Jesus and His credibility to be exactly what He said He was and Who He said He was- the sinless Lord and the only Way for anybody to be saved.

And now what we're going to see- is that this same miracle working Jesus is now headed to the Cross to die. And look at all the hostility against Him. Look at the abject hatred and the vitriol against the purest human who ever lived. Look at all the plots and the plans against God's Love personified. Watch what's happening as God Sovereignly moves to divide between the sheep and the goats; between the fish on the left side and the fish on the right side; between the children of God and the children of the devil; between the tares and the wheat; between unworthy sinners chosen for Salvation and unworthy sinners left to their own rebellion and damnation.

And up to now- it's all been about His Coming but from now on- it's going to all be about His Going. So here Jesus is literally moving toward His final exaltation; moving toward the full Revelation of His

Messiahship; and the full manifestation of His humiliation.

Now at this point- the Galilean Ministry is over. Jesus has spent over a year ministering to these people- but He will never see them again. They have experienced over a year of miracles and preaching the good news of forgiveness and the good news of the Kingdom of God, and now there is less than a year of His life remaining.

These people have had all that they're going to have of Jesus; they have seen all they are going to see; they have heard all they are going to hear and now each one of them will stand before God- fully accountable for what they did with what they were graciously given by God.

And these final months of Jesus' earthly life are very important. They're the time frame of going toward the Cross and this is a very important time because as Jesus moves past His Exaltation through the manifestation of His Divine Power and Authority- He now moves into the manifestation of His Humiliation.

And He has been teaching His disciples just Who He was. Earlier in Chapter 9 they said, *"We get it- You're the Christ of God."* And then the Mount of Transfiguration and they see the fullness of His Glory and in a sense His Coming is now complete- because now they know exactly Who Jesus is. And now their carnal minds are ready for the logical next step- a crown. Now they're ready for heavenly glory. They're ready for the Kingdom. And even though Jesus has clearly told them that He is going to die first- they have not heard this and they have not understood it. They now know Who Jesus is and now they're ready for the next logical step- Jesus' grand coronation.

But in the middle of all the ecstasy- Jesus says, *"Wait a minute- not so fast."* In **Luke 9: 22** He says:

The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, the scribes, be killed, raised up the third day.

And then in Verse 44,

Let these words sink in your ears, the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.

... but in the Providence of God's great Mystery look what **Luke 9:45** says:

But they did not understand this statement, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement.

And this is where God's Ways are not like our ways. The Apostles were all ready for great acceptance and great glory and great victory. Jesus has just revealed Himself in His Glory and now they think is the time that Jesus will continue His Coming in even greater Power and Glory to the rest of the world.

But Jesus stops them cold and says, *"Wait a minute! You saw the glory but the glory is not yet possible because before the crown there has to be the cross, before the glory there has to be the suffering. Before the exaltation there has to be the humiliation."*

So this is a really important teaching time. Now that they know Who Jesus is- now that they know His Power and the Revelation of His Person; now they have to understand the great importance of His Suffering and Death. And so now we're going to go through the training of the Twelve and in these months as He takes them through the valley of humiliation with a few moments of wondrous glory- but as they go through this time of humiliation- Jesus is going to teach them all the things they need to know to articulate the New Covenant and to formulate what His Life and Words and Death and Resurrection meant and how all that tied in with the Old Covenant and how to establish the Church after He is gone.

And this training will go on from right here in **Luke 9:51** all the way down to **Luke 19:27**. That is the section of the training of the Twelve as Jesus moves toward Jerusalem- almost 10 complete Chapters.

Now the amazing thing about all this is that Jerusalem is only a couple of days walk from Galilee. So this is not like they're going straight there. It wouldn't take months to get there. This is a meandering path. He's out of Galilee. He goes back later. He goes over here, over there. He makes a couple of short trips to Jerusalem. But it all is focused ultimately on ending up in Jerusalem on that Passover time of His Own Execution. And all the way along the miracles that He does, the things that He does in His teaching are to equip this group of Twelve to be the first generation of gospel preachers in the world.

It is similar to the path that God took the children of Israel. What should have only taken a couple of months took 40 years in the wilderness- primarily so that all the unbelievers would all die out. So this Journey of several months with Jesus and His Apostles is so that all remaining unbelief in the Apostles would die out. Now read verse 51 with me again:

When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;

Now what you can't really see here from the English is how Luke wrote about a *fulfillment* of Jesus' ascension. Luke used the Greek word, "sunpleroo" here which has to do with a fulfillment.

So these are specific days. Sunpleroo is used in connection with the Plan of God. God says something and it's fulfilled. God plans something and it's fulfilled. That is sunpleroo- fulfilled or fully or completely fulfilled.

So Jesus operated on a Divine timetable. There were times when Jesus said, "*His hour had not yet come.*" And then there was another time when He said, "*My hour has come.*" So He didn't operate on a human schedule or a human timetable- but on God's timetable. And He knew that the days were approaching- the fulfillment- the *sunpleroo* - was coming when He would be *analepsis* or be lifted up. There are only a finite number of months left and so it is time to crank up the instruction of the Twelve and it is time to progress through both suffering and sorrow.

Now what exactly is this ascension? Look at it, verse 51, it's the word, "*analepsis*" and it's only used here in the entire Bible. It means: *to lift up or to take up*. Some Theologians think it could be the Cross.
John 3:14:

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;

"lifted up" is *analepsis*. And John 12:32,

and I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

So is this “ascension” that Luke writes here in **Luke 9:51** the Cross rather than His physical ascension into Heaven? Is that what Luke has in mind? Could be.

But the translators must have had something other than that in mind when they used the word “ascension”. And I think there's a reason for that. And if you go back to **Luke 9:31**- you remember that up on the mountain at the Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared in glory, they were talking with Jesus and they were speaking of His “departure” or His “exodus”. And there it is not the cross- but His final departure from the earth that Jesus has in view. It is, **John 17:4&5** where Jesus says,

4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

And what Jesus was saying was, “I’ve done everything You wanted Me to do- now I’m ready to come back.” This is what **Hebrews 12** calls

“...the joy that was set before Him”

.. which empowered Jesus to endure the Cross and the shame- because He despised the shame. So Jesus could go through all the shame because He could see past the Cross to the glorious Joy that was set before Him in His ascension when He was lifted up and set at the right hand of God and given a Name- the name “Lord” which is above every name that at that Name every knee should bow in heaven and earth and under the earth.

Jesus looked all the way to heavenly glory- even though He knew the path was through great and painful humiliation. So there were about 32 years of Jesus’ Coming and His Revelation and His Unveiling and now there will be a few months of His Going. Thirty two years to reveal Himself as Deity in great Power and Glory and a few months to go through horrific suffering. And so it says in verse 51,

... He was determined to go to Jerusalem

The King James says:

... he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

The Greek word here is "*sterizo*" which means: *determined or to set* and the tense of the verb allows you to add a word, "*stedfastly*" to that. So this gives the idea that this wasn't easy to do. There had to be self-discipline and conviction and resolve to do this. In the Garden when Jesus was being tempted by Satan He said,

If possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not My will be Yours be done,

..., this is *sterizo*- which shows the amazing resolve and discipline and focused determination of Jesus to go through with all the suffering, and the rejection and even the execution and worse than any of that- the Wrath of God that would fall on Him on the Cross. So the resolve of Jesus is unwavering and here in **Luke 9** is where it starts. So His Coming is over and now the Going has begun. Now let's look again at **Luke 9: 52:**

and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.

So they're headed down towards Jerusalem in a meandering fashion- a journey that is going to literally take them months and months to accomplish. And the first place it says the advance team went was a village of the Samaritans. And this is huge because it illustrates what Dr. Luke is saying to this Greek dignitary to whom he wrote these two Books- Theophilus.

This tells us that the Ministry of Jesus was extensive and expansive- because it went way beyond the conventional limitations of the Jew of that day. You see, Matthew focuses his gospel entirely on the Jews- to tell them that Jesus is the true King of the Jews. But Luke embraces the entire Gentile world. Luke knocks down all the conventional walls of Jewish self- righteousness and exclusiveness.

Back in Chapter 1- in the Magnificat of Mary- Mary celebrates the blessing of God upon the Jews. But in the blessing of Simeon at the

temple of the child Jesus in Chapter 2- Simeon celebrates the Salvation of the Gentiles. So very early on in this Gospel- we know from Luke's account that this is a Messiah- Who has come to both Jew and Gentile and when He goes to the synagogue in Nazareth and preaches that great sermon out of **Luke 6**- He says in effect,

"Salvation is not just for Jews. Salvation is for anyone who is: the poor, prisoners, blind and oppressed- whether they are Jew or Gentile."

And Jesus told Nicodemus in **John 3** that God didn't just love the Jew- but that the Father loved the entire world and that whoever has been blessed by God with saving faith to believe in Him- no matter what his culture or his nation or his language or the amount of sin he is in- if he believes- not if he is born in the right family- but if he believes- he would have eternal life- regardless of who they were. This was radical Theology.

Anyone who has been given the Sovereign ability to know that they are spiritually destitute can be saved- just like in the Old Testament when God went to a pagan Gentile widow in Zarephath and God also delivered a Syrian Gentile terrorist named Naaman.

So Luke features the expansiveness of God's redemptive Mercy here by telling us that the first place that Jesus sent His ambassadors to was a Samaritan village.

Remember- it was Dr. Luke who reminds us of how Jesus hung around tax collectors and prostitutes and criminals and riff-raff and needy people. Luke writes about the lepers and the demonized and the diseased and the dead and women and thieves and the fringes of society and even further, as we'll see in the chapters ahead of us, the poor, the handicapped, the blind and even children.

So Jesus just shattered all the stereotypes. The rabbis didn't want to pay attention to any of those groups. But Jesus cared for those of low status, all ages, all genders, all races offering divine mercy to everybody. At the same time that the Pharisees and the scribes, according to **Matthew 23:23**, paid no attention to justice or mercy, Jesus broke all the conventional stereotypes of religion.

And so, Jesus has to train His Twelve to this expansive proclamation of the true Gospel- that it doesn't matter where you have been; it doesn't matter what you have done; it doesn't matter how bad

you have been or how long you have been bad. The Gospel is for every single person who believes and we have no idea who that is- so everyone who has been mercifully granted repentance will be saved- regardless of their background. That is Grace. That is the Christian Gospel.

And people who want to exclude the Gospel and the Church and make it only for those that they want to accept are no better than these self-righteous Jews. Listen to me- you do not weaken the Gospel by opening it up to the whole world- you strengthen it. You weaken the Gospel by placing restrictions on who can be saved and who can hear and who can be your brother and sister.

Only the elect will be saved. That is what the Bibel teaches. But we do not have a clue who the elect is. So we are commanded to sow seed to as many people as we can every day and we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature and we are command to work with and to love and to accept all who name the name of Jesus- regardless of where they are coming from.

If they are chosen- they will serve God and if they do not serve God- it is because God is not dealing with them- at least not right now. That isn't any of our business. We do not get to pick our natural brothers and sisters and we do not get to pick our spiritual brothers and sisters either. But we are commanded to love every single person that God loves- regardless of background and regardless of how dirty they have been.

Now it is very important to know that most of the false religions of the world have absolutely no mercy. The false deities of these doctrines of demons are vicious demanding "gods" who care little or nothing of the people who devote themselves to them. Islam is absolutely without mercy as the wicked god- Allah requires his followers to strap bombs to their children. That is merciless. Hinduism and Buddhism are without any mercy at all. The false gods of these pagan religions care nothing about their followers.

And back in the 1st Century- the Jews had very little mercy for children or women. They had no mercy at all for Gentiles. And of all the people on the earth- the Jews hated the Samaritans. And the Samaritans hated the Jews right back. So there was great animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Samaria was right in the middle between Galilee and Jerusalem and when Jews would travel down from Galilee towards Jerusalem-

they would walk around Samaria so their feet wouldn't pick up any dirt from Samaria.

It is like what we have had here in Gulfport- where you have Gulfport proper and the area here where our Church is located- the Orange Grove area. A few years ago- the City of Gulfport wanted to annex Orange Grove. And as they made their plans- they wanted to just skip over the area right in the middle called, "North Gulfport" where all the poor people live. It took a Federal Judge to force Gulfport to annex North Gulfport before they could annex Orange Grove.

And back in the 1st Century- Jews wouldn't even walk through Samaria. They'd go all the way around and cross over the River Jordan twice- just to avoid going through Samaria- because they considered it to be a defiled, unclean place where half breeds lived.

And the Jewish historian Josephus wrote that Jews who did travel through Samaria did so at great risk- carrying their own food so they wouldn't have to eat at the hands of the Samaritans. And some of the Jews were murdered on the way through.

So this was typical middle-eastern tribal hostility that we see even today. Samaritans were a mixed race, semi-pagan offspring of Israelites from the northern kingdom who were left behind when the northern kingdom was taken into Assyrian captivity, they were left there, they intermarried with pagans who were loyal to the Assyrian king so they were considered to be "half breeds" and they had abandoned their Jewish roots and heritage and had absorbed paganism.

But **2Kings 17:33** says that they feared the Lord to some extent- even though they continued to serve their own gods. So they were a strange mixture of race and religion. And they conducted their worship at a place called Mount Gerizim because their temple had been destroyed in 128 BC by a man named Hecanus.

So even though they had no temple- they still had their own religion- which was full of spirit but void of any truth. So they were a mongrel race and a mongrel religion- deemed unclean and hated by the Jews.

But we need to remember that much to the Jews amazement- it was to a Samaritan woman that Jesus first revealed His Messiahship in **John 4**. And Jesus made a Samaritan the hero of one of His most wonderful stories called, "The Good Samaritan," which was a scathing rebuke to the Jewish leaders- because the rabbis and the Jewish leaders

passed by and didn't help the man. And later Jesus commissioned the Apostles to take the Gospel into Samaria.

So the Lord Jesus never had a problem with extending the borders of His Mercy. And so He sent messengers on ahead of Him into the despised area of the Samaritans. Now look at **Luke 9:53**:

But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

Now why didn't they receive Him? Because they didn't like Jesus' Theology? Because they had some religious problem? No, the Samaritans didn't receive Jesus because He was journeying with His face toward Jerusalem. They hated the fact that He was going down to worship at that Temple in Jerusalem- which they despised. And they were so jealous. As I said- their temple had been destroyed in 128 BC by Herkanus and was never rebuilt and they had this meager sort of unsophisticated outdoor kind of worship while this magnificent Herodian temple was in the city of Jerusalem and it was just a bone of contention and a point of jealousy with them and so they weren't about to accommodate anybody in their enemy camp going down there.

Hate had already existed between them and it was exacerbated by the destruction of their own facility. Old feelings ran deep and were lasting.

And so it wasn't really a theological objection- it was more about this whole racial thing and this jealousy thing. And in verse 54 when Jesus' disciples, James and John, saw this- their own deep seated feelings rose to the surface and they said,

"Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

And who could blame them, right? I mean God surely wasn't interested in these pagan half breeds anyway. God would never choose a Samaritan, right? And now they have insulted Jesus and so this reaction is somewhat understandable. The Apostles love the Lord and they've seen His Glory on the mountain and so there is a touch of nobility in this righteous indignation.

Remember that these two men are not called "the sons of thunder" because of the great patience and their great love and their great

kindness. These were violent men who just periodically exploded in anger. Aren't you glad we have all risen above such carnal demonstrations?

So these men were already looking down their noses at the Samaritans anyway and they were probably tired and probably hungry and probably wanting to rest and their Lord has been dishonored and He is the God of the universe in human flesh and they are just outraged by this. And they say, "*Lord*," feeling their sort of apostolic oats a little bit,

"Do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

Well what made them think they could do that anyway? They had never done that before. Oh they had healed some people and maybe raised the dead and perhaps cast out some demons, but they hadn't been calling fire down from heaven. So what in the world are they thinking?

Well, to find out- you have to come back next week- because I have to stop right here.

So let's pray.